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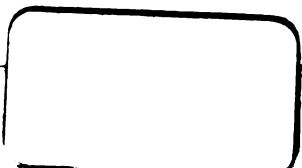
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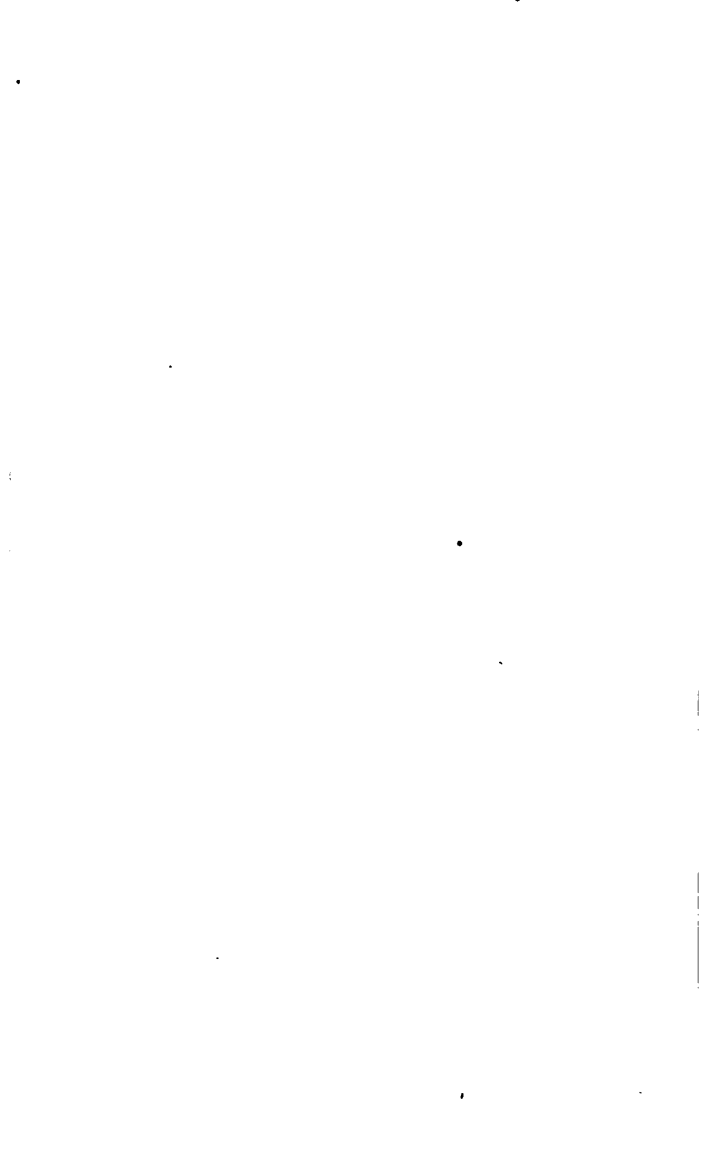
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL,

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BY

HENRY SEPTIMUS SUTTON

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1886

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POEMS

TO MY FATHER.

*See, Father, here are flowers! They're all thine own;
Gather'd for thee, and tied, by love and duty;
Let them be dear, if but for that alone,
Pleasant for the intent, if not the beauty.
No man should dare despise a single one,
Since given to a father by a son.*

*I had not ask'd thy hand to find them room
If worthless I had deem'd them: but if each
Were but a weed, and if, while roses bloom,
No daisy should dare live,—as some men preach,—
Yet, surely, if the least delight or pride
Aught here gave thee, I should be justified.*

October 30, 1848.



EUGENE.

*It sings of Nature's thrills, her sounds and sights,
A lonely boy, and some of his delights.*

THE light that parleys with a poet's eyes
Hath more rays than the mere prismatic seven,
For goes therewith a flush of such fine dyes
As makes of earth meet vestibule for heaven,
Blends with all dullest things a lifeful leaven,
And quickens to a full sweet Sunday grace
The dead looks in this world's old workday face.

When Eugene's eyes in infant wonderment
First questioned this mysterious world, for him
In vain spake tongueful Nature ; vainly spent
The Earth her beautiful continual hymn ;
Why did he look with such perception dim ?
Why dreamt he not of that poetic soul
Majestical that vivifies the whole ?

Yet sometimes came wild startlings, and his eyes
Widened and burned, as reading wondrous lore,
But then at once the exquisite surprise
Would die down into dulness as before ;
For the Muse knew he might not yet bear more,
So let flit dimly past his soul forlorn
Joys bodiless that must not yet be born.

At length, the gates of vision came unchained ;
New light flowed outward through his wondering eyes,
Whose eagerness continually gained
Ungessed-of news from earth and air and skies ;
And many till then obstinate mysteries
He as acquaintance boldly could accost,
Their cold reserve and distance being lost.

Now for his heart athirst new solace ran,
Poured from the only source that satisfies ;
For Nature's old dull crust all o'er began
To crack and peel, and through the clefts his eyes
Caught glimpses of the Deity that lies
Creative under all. Whate'er he saw
Was quick with new thought, wonder, worship, awe.

All musical he grew, all musical,
For melody would start about his heart,
And oft sound with so audible a call,
And be so real, so from himself apart,
It seemed an echo from God's throne did start,—
That some sad sinner had been just forgiven,
And the glad angels rang the bells of heaven.

Now what Prometheus meant might Eugene see,
For this creative creature 'gan to give
Heaven's living fire so wide and lavishly
That all inanimate things appear'd to live :
To fields and flowers the boy grew talkative ;
Accosted stars and stones ; enjoy'd the meeting
With trees, which held their arms out for his greeting.

So he was never alone ; for,—lying,—float
Would music round his pillow ; walking,—air
Grow busy with low voices ; on the river,—
The water seem all pulsed by footsteps fair
With little whirling dimples here and there ;
Or,—turning round,—be glimpsed swift vanishings
Of robes ethereal and mysterious wings.

All things were changed :—the little gentle flowers
Were brothers, now, and sisters to Eugene ;
The birds were feather-veilèd guardian powers
Tenanting leafy thrones, with loving mien,
To watch earth's good, and sing sweet songs between ;
The dew that when the stars burn bright is given,
Was precious oil dropp'd from those lamps of heaven.

Earth was a glorious great kaleidoscope
Which, turning ever, fed his eye anew :
He lived in one wide palace of fine hope,
With floor of green, and archèd roof of blue,
And he a son of its great Maker too,—
A son made grandly welcome to each part,
And with a son's right to be glad in heart.

All things had influence for him ; all his heart
Was as a harp of such responsive strings,
That not an evening primrose could out-start,
No lark shake rapture from its fluttering wings,
Not the least motion rise in natural things,
But all its chords would tremble and compete
In rich vibration, eloquently sweet.

Thus Nature, as with delicate-fingered wind,
Played soft Æolian music in his breast,
And wooed him ever with her courtship kind
Till she had won him to a sweet unrest,
And made his heart all eager with a zest
For converse with her in the loneliest bowers,
Loving her to her face for hours and hours.

Now he delighted, stretched on bed of grass,
To learn the looks of the sun-lighted skies ;
Cloud-watching, till his lifted soul would pass
To God's great heaven of thought-wove tapestries ;
There lie at catch for inward symphonies,
For sweetness and for fulness far above
All sounds of earth that men's ears drink and love.

Yet also glad was he for cloven shout
Of cuckoo, and for all the voiceful throng
That wreath their voluntaries in and out,
Felicitous, the leafy boughs among ;—
Glad even of the gnats' drowsed undersong ;
And he liked, too, the sound of merriment
By distant steeple's loud-tongued tenants sent ;

Who, tossing up their heads imperious, find
Tasks and long errands for the busy gales,
Measuring out bellfuls of melodious wind
Impregnated and spiced with chiming tales
Which ought the winds to bear into far vales,
But, careless, lose part of their message sweet,
So bring a burden richly incomplete :—

And glad was he, to list when all around
Harsh winter blasts throng in, the world to freeze,
Each to keen edge and cutting sharpness ground
On icy pavements of the northern seas,
And hear them fighting with the uprooted trees,
Beating the boughs on their bleak threshing floors,
Whooping out triumph o'er far howling moors :—

Or watch when March sends out his windy elves
To shake by th' shoulders the deep slumbering trees,
To bid them wake and dress their drowsy selves
In haste the approaching Lady Spring to please ;
Nor may those tiresome breezes cease to tease,
Until each giant, answering their appeals,
In a green mantle its gaunt arms conceals :—

Or see some tree shake its sad aged head,
Priming the wind with storm-foreboding sighs,
While each leaf writheth on its stalky thread,
And, shuddering, whispereth rainy prophecies,
Because the black clouds, weary of the skies,
Spent with far travel, sullen stand, and roar,
And, till unladen, vow they 'll move no more :—

Or watch the dozing twilight drop asleep
Just when the setting sun gives Eve's first star
Her cue upon that boundless stage to leap,
Whereto ten thousand mighty orbs afar
The theatre and watchful audience are ;—
Why fears it not to play its little part ?
Why shines it on with an unflurried heart ?

Gently it twinkleth there its prologue out
Till that fair stage grows brighter by a moon,
And the quick stars scatter themselves about,
Peopling all skiey nooks and by-ways soon,
That no place lack its little glimmering boon ;
And prouder grow the rich and populous skies
Twinkling all over with a thousand eyes.

But oh, how healing to all aching pang,
On profiled moon's bright crescent thin to gaze,
And on her fine sharp horns intense to hang
A thousand phantasies a thousand ways !
Or, when her face grows to a fuller phase,
How sweet to calm our passion's seething lees
In her pure beams of cooling, soothing ease !

Yet are there times when cruel witchcraft fills
Her light, no longer friendly ; when a flood
Of chill lone feeling passionates and thrills
Our hearts, and kills our calmness in the bud ;
When hints to grief, half-vaguely understood,
By her are lent, till our unbidden eyes
Our cheeks with mournful overflow surprise.

For then come visions of the old home-places,
Dear, consecrated, incense-haunted fanes ;
And then rise memories of lost forms and faces,
Rise, like old vials' odours sweet, and strains
Of songs that sob to music that complains ;
While airs leap on us from forgotten climes
Rich with the holy breath of better times.

Ay, we may weep, and weep ! They will not come,—
The soft warm hand ; the voluble dear eye ;
Lips whereon, open, sweet speech ; whereon, dumb,
The honey-gift, for us did ever lie :
They will not come, though we for grief should die.
Eugene was not too young for memory's tongue
To pierce his soul ;—who is there that 's too young ?

But, when the stars dim out, and darkling lies
Earth under moonless heaven, then would Eugene
The thickening night confront, and let his eyes
On the blind blackness grapple with stern mien,
While groan'd the trees in dusky turmoil keen,
As if the horrible winds their stretch did swell
To span some dread Æolian harp of hell.

O Night, thou speaker in all awful tones
Of bale and unredeemable despair !
Why hang'st thou on thy winds such creaks and moans
As might almost persuade us that we hear
Old earth's huge axle grind ? Why should thy fear
Make dread torpedo-thoughts swim in by shoals,
Smiting to dumbness our astounded souls ?

Yet in the excitements of the night not oft
Did Eugene revel thus ; fields and the day
Had better pleasures for him ;—as, when soft
The morning blows o'er flowers, then away
With the white river to keep holiday ;—
To brighten in broad sunshine ; or to run
Where flickering shadows half deny the sun ;—

Or hear the birds, orchestred deep in leaves,
Transmute, with power alchemic, to sweet strain,
Air lately mute, while the young sun-dawn weaves
Fine gold into the clouds, and earth amain
Like sun-woke Memnon's statue o'er again,
Greets its first beams, and, to proclaim its rise,
All her sweet, living, feathery psalteries plies.

And Eugene liked some glorious book to bring
Beneath the trees, and read, on some hill-side,
Of Isabella's piteous gardening,
Or Porphyro's thief-venture for a bride ;
Or how old Apollonius, cruel-eyed,
Shoots arrows from bent eyebrow bows, to slay
Lycius and Lamia on their wedding-day :—

Or any other essence of man's heart
Distill'd by poets to eternal times ;
But ever loathingly the boy would start
From tales, unantidoted poison-rhymes,
Of souls all fungus'd over with their crimes,—
Too busy with sharp-rowel'd passions' goading
To take or heed forbidding or foreboding.

And often to the boy an impulse came
Urging his soul to try her strength in songs ;
For what was in him but a fiery flame?
And what were round him but symphonious throngs
Of words that seem'd to fall from heavenly tongues?
And what was left him, but to vent that flame,
And utter those sweet sayings as they came?

Ay, though sage list'ners mock'd his harp's young tones,
And bade him cease from the ambitious trade,
Why should he cease? Fire shut up in the bones
Consumes to baneful ash its barricade.
Why should he cease? For the whole world was made,
Glorious with foregleams of what might be done
In noble work,—ay, and what honour won.

'Tis true, indeed, the thought of wealth or fame
Belongs not rightly to the poet's pleasures ;
He must not damp that pure high-aiming flame
For popular praise, nor play those heaven-born measures
On strings tuned low to th' chink of earthly treasures ;
He must not dream GOD's great trusts may be sold ;
He must not dare to cramp his soul in gold.

Yet while he works for duty's sake in chief,
Not too much loving voices that applaud,
The poet should not be without belief
That in the boundaries of our language broad
There will be one or two kind souls unawed
By others' censure, who will find in him,
If dimness, yet at least some gold not dim.

Thus is he not so lower'd below or raised
Above his kind, as to be all unmoved
And careless of the sweet of being praised ;
Thinks it a bliss to have his rhymes approved
By noble souls, of Goodness well-beloved ;—
Hopes to be read at least by one or two
Such as I know, and such as Eugene knew.

And oft he pictures some heart, precious cruse
Of holy human feeling, that shall read
His leaves, and not, because of dross, quite lose
His genuine gold ; that shall her glances feed
On rhymes that cannot ask a better meed ;
And some kind smiles upon the book bestow
Of him who writes for her he ne'er will know.

And oft he pictures some large-hearted youth
Shall love the unknown rhymers, for the sake
Of the known rhymes ; one not gnaw'd by the tooth
Of worldliness ; not seized of Mammon-ache ;
To Friendship, Beauty, Goodness, all awake :—
For such he hopes to work ; with such to stand
A friend unseen, yet shaken by the hand.

LOSS.

' I FAINT, I die,' cried the apple-tree,
 ' All my dear fruit is gone from me.'
Cheer up, mistaken one ! There be
Fifty more good crops in thee.

THE SKY AT NIGHT.

GREAT House of spaces, rolling orbs and years !

Rebuking this world's self-important hum
With the vast, awful silence of thy spheres,
Thou with enormous thought-stretch mak'st us dumb.
Yet if in thee I, simply like a child,

The floor of heaven, and the wide roof, may see,
Of this dear endless earth of our delight,

I shall be reconciled
To let my song live happy, loud, and free,
A bold sedge-warbler 'neath the Sky at night.

With thee it is, and with thy stars, that now,

O child-entrancing Sky, I have to do ;
Thou art the highway of the Moon, and thou
Shalt be the highway of my spirit too.

Clouds climb, and cannot touch thee ; winds blow high
And cannot reach thee ; but my thought shall reach,
And ride, as all thy starry navies ride,

On thy broad breast, O Sky !
With every floating brilliance there hold speech,
And sail far off on thy slow western tide.

Stars ! Gems scintillant, in most ancient wells

Of cold, keen lustre dyed unto the core :—

Stars ! Rosaries whereon old Time still tells

His years and ages as he says them o'er :—

Stars ! Signal-lights which for her fast ally,

The giant Night, to bid him hasten on

His reinforcements, Twilight high upholds :—

Stars ! Night-flowers of the sky,

Waking at glow-worm time, and one by one

All noiseless starting full-blown from your folds :—

Great glorious company of throbbing flames !

Joyful dismissers of the dismal dark !

How could men foist on you their savage names,

And your vague groups with lying lines demark ?

How could they cage you up, a wild-beast show

Of Lion, Scorpion, Centaur, Dragon, Bear,

Awed by Orion's club-uplifting boast ?

The child's heart will not know

Such fancies grim ; it loves your aspects fair,

And re-installs your undivided host.

With what slow pace, and with what silent shoon,
And with what pale looks tenderly astray,
Comes up the Lady of the Sky, the Moon,
Sunk in deep thought as of some bygone day !
Through her sky-field insensibly she glides
Among her star-flowers blooming in the night,
Of all their crowd unconscious, till the hour
When, as young Morn uprides,
The Sun ascending with his scythe of light
Shall mow down, masterful, each shining flower.

But oh, thou dark-blue Sky-mead ! Would that I
Might stand upon thee,—might look down and see
How daisies stars are, in our meadowy sky,
As stars seem brighter daisies upon thee.
Life is on all sides beautiful ; it sees
Its courts between two all-wide beauties set,—
Roof'd with blue beauty, with green beauty paved :—
We need our miseries !
Else would our souls their higher aim forget,
And be to Nature's fairness all enslaved.

And oh, thou dark Cloak, God's own vestment wide,—

Blue sprinkled o'er with twinkling drops of gold,—

Would that some wind might blow thee once aside

To give us glimpse of glories thou dost hold !

Yet Whom thou coverest thou canst not hide ;

Through thy all-marvellous texture showers a rain

Of splendours such as in the old time gave

Thee to be deified :—

How can we wonder that the ancient brain

Should deem thy stars gods strong to slay or save ?

For so they sit, each night, calm on the sky,

Reading what day hath writ on earth's wide page,

That hardly keep from adoration I,

Born to the usage of a Christian age.

But I am taught, and may not bend the knee,

And may not give clasp'd worship of the hands ;

Yet must the stars the sacred symbols seem

Of truth divine to me,—

Truth that for ever high above us stands

To wake our souls from earth's engrossing dream.

Great floor of heaven, with star-seed oversown,—

Floor by the hand Divine for ever laid,—

What feet are on thee ! feet all spotless grown,

And kiss'd with robes whose pureness casts no shade,

Fluttering for ever in the wind of praise,—

Feet of the sinless, from whose large eyes looks

Wide wonder blent with joy's peculiar flame,—

Wide wonder at God's ways,—

Sinless, whose foreheads He hath ta'en for books

Whereon to write the splendours of His name.

Stars, bright inheritors of heaven ! O tell

Some little abstract of what ye have known,

In God's metropolis wherein ye dwell,

O'er-flooded by the glories of the throne !

Jewels, set in the floor of heaven, and trod

Of blest feet, tell us of the joy they know

Whose praises, humbly daring, upward spring

To kiss the feet of God,—

Bright angels, each conveying to or fro

Some vouchsafed message, on proud-swelling wing !

They will not speak, these stars, to fleshly ear ;—

Of angels and of heavenly temple, dumb,

And of the Lord of angels, they appear ;

Yet to the spirit's ear their anthems come.

Shine o'er us, then, your message bright to bring,

Great hieroglyphs of God, for ever shine ;

And while ye all, like vocal tongues of flame,

In sensuous silence, sing,

Lift high our thoughts to the great House divine,

And thrill with worship of th' Eternal Name !

PYRRHO.

PYRRHO doubts in all things shows

With an ingenious skill ;

Says, even, 'tis false the river flows,

Or that its banks stand still.

Trent was in this very place .

Under Cæsar's power,

And its banks move on through space

Some thousand miles an hour.

UNDER THE ALDER-TREE.

*It was a sad soul sitting
Beneath an Alder-tree ;
From death's insensate fiction
He was not yet set free ;
Not spirit's life but body's death
Was all that he could see,
And so he sat, and thus he cried,
Beneath the Alder-tree.*

CHAIN of life, me binding down
To the rock of misery,
With the sorrow-vulture eating
At the heart, I weary o' thee,
For She cannot come again,
Cannot come ever to me.
Joy,—all joy,—all joy is o'er,—
Joy of speech or silent eyes,—
Mine, ah mine no more, no more,
To heal the heart all broken in me,
For the wind wailleth where she lies
Under the Alder-tree.

Face, where, while we gaze on 't, feeling,
 Penetrate with purity,
Springs from soul-roots, through the feature
 Upward branching like a tree,—
Oh, Her looks ! They were like skies
 Raining blessing ever on me !
Ever on me ? Wo 's me, 'tis o'er ;
 Lost, ah, lost the love of her eyes,
They shall smile no more, no more,
 To heal the heart all broken in me,
For the leaf withereth where she lies
 Under the Alder-tree.

Then a step so softly stately,
 So divinely womanly,
That than angel's own it seemeth
 Not by one sin's weight less free,—
Oh, Her step ! And it always came
 Springing lighter, springing to me !
To me ? Wo 's me, 'tis o'er, 'tis o'er ;
 She never, never to meet me flies ;
She will come no more, no more,
 To heal the heart all broken in me ;
Green grass is growing where she lies
 Under the Alder-tree.

Then a mouth, whereto is given
Voice to be the clue and key
To old dreams that rocked the poet
On the cradle of their knee :—
Oh, Her voice ! 'Twas like high heaven
Saying kind things ever to me !
Ever to me ? Wo 's me, 'tis o'er ;
I call, and call ; she never replies ;
Speak she will no more, no more,
To heal the heart all broken in me,
For the owl hoots where she lies
Under the Alder-tree.

Then a sudden, sweet emotion
Of so absolute purity
That for once we understand
How sacred mortal flesh can be :—
Oh, Her touch ! Oh, soft her hand,
Soft, warm, kind, ever to me !
Ever to me ? Wo 's me, 'tis o'er,
And a voice within me cries
She shall press my hand no more
To heal the heart all broken in me,
For nettles thrive where my Love lies
Under the Alder-tree.

Then a touch at whose intenseness,—
Like an electricity
Sheathed in down,—flesh, soul, change places
Till we know not which we be ;—
Kiss, like pressure of angel's wing
Warm of heaven's glory, ever to me !
Ever to me ? Wo 's me, 'tis o'er ;
She shall hallow my cheeks, mine eyes,
With her lips no more, no more,
To heal the heart all broken in me,
For the worm gnaws where my Love lies
Under the Alder-tree.

Evermore the sorrow-vulture
Eateth at the spirit's core.
Fate and death away have taken
What they never may restore ;
For She will not come again,—
Come again, for evermore !
Bliss,—all bliss,—all bliss is o'er,
Naught but death's dismay and sighs,
For She's mine no more, no more,
To heal the heart all broken in me,
For cold stones cover her where she lies
Under the Alder-tree.

THE DAISY.

A GOLD and silver cup
Upon a pillar green,
Earth holds her Daisy up
To catch the sunshine in ;—
A dial-plant, set there
To show each radiant hour ;—
A field-astronomer,
A sun-observing flower ;—

A little rounded croft
Where winged kine may graze ;—
A golden meadow soft,
Quadrille-ground for young fays ;—
A fenced-in yellow plot
With pales milk-white and clean,
Each tipt with crimson spot
And set in ground of green.

The children with delight
To meet the Daisy run ;
They love to see how bright
She shines upon the sun.
Like lowly white-crown'd queen
She graciously doth bend,
And stands with quiet mien
The little children's friend.

Sometimes the Daisy's seen,
A simple rustic maid,
In comely gown of green,
And pure white frill array'd,
Dreaming, like one in mood
Of hope by fancy spun,
Awaiting to be wooed,
And willing to be won.

The dandy Butterfly,
All exquisitely dress'd,
Before the Daisy's eye
Displays his velvet vest ;
In vain is he array'd
In all that gaudy show ;
What need hath rustic maid
Of such a foppish beau ?

The vagrant Bee but sings
For what he gets thereby,
Nor comes, except he brings
His pocket on his thigh ;
Then let him start aside
And woo some wealthier flower ;
The Daisy 's not his bride,
She hath no honey-dower.

The Gnat, old back-bent fellow,
In frugal frieze-coat drest,
Seeks on her carpet yellow
His tottering limbs to rest ;
He woos her with eyes dim,
Voice thin, and aspect sage ;—
What careth she for him ?
What mate is youth for age ?

Upon her head she lifts,
Where they can best be seen,
Her little golden gifts
In white-fringed basket green :
Still ready to be met
In every passing hour,
The little children's pet,
Their ever-faithful flower.

SOLITUDE.

*Sweet Solitude !—The Frenchman's happy play
Of wit I here with graver thought implete ;—
Yes, sweet is Solitude, if but we may
The Lord take with us, unto Whom to say
That Solitude is sweet.*

*But He'll not only smile and answer ' Yea ' ;—
Ere long He'll lead us to a place of ships,
And He will make us go aboard that day,
To send us from dear Solitude away,
Even though it be with whips.*

WHY be grieved that I your converse
Now and then refuse ?
Or to say nought for awhile
In your presence choose ?
Pleasant are your voices,
Dearest ones, to me,
More pleasant, yea, than Sabbath-bells
At holy evening be :
But nearer still my yearning soul
Would have your voices dear ;
Be silent, therefore, that your thoughts
I may the better hear.

I love to gaze upon your face,
The meaning there to read,
Dear One, in whose heart's embrace
Is privilege indeed ;
But why be so sad-hearted,
Why feel mortified,
If I leave you now and then
In lonely place to hide ?

From hill and vale they call me,
From star, and moss, and stone ;
I cannot list those voices wise
Unless I be alone.
When long I keep away therefrom,
The life within me dies ;
With them conversing, soon upsprings
New vigour to mine eyes.
Again my step is firm ; again
I breathe a manly breath :
Marvel not then I go to hear
What each still Speaker saith.
Not even your presence, Sweet, shall win my soul
To be in love with death.

WILL AND WAY.

YOU complain : 'Outward snares are too strong ;
Meaning right, I am forced to do wrong : '—
Nonsense, man ! Sin's vile course you must stay,
For where'er there 's a will there 's a way.

Say no more you can not, for you can !
Up, this fight must be fought ! Play the man
What we ought to achieve, that we may,
And where'er there 's a will there 's a way.

Never flinch ; never dare turn aside ;
Hard will prove not so hard when you 've tried ;
Practice makes hardest work easy play,
And where'er there 's a will there 's a way.

Not in strength of our own can we win ;
Ask of God ! He will fight with your sin :
Help'd by Him, then indeed shall you say,
' Now I know, where 's the will, there 's the way.'

THE STAR.

FIRST Star of evening, show thy face,
For the world waits for thee ;—
The swallow to the owl gives place,
And to the bat the bee ;—
Gleam out, thou radiance intense !
Thrust quick this growing darkness hence
That, thickening, gives my yearning eyes
Such unabash'd offence.

Lift thy dark eyelid, gentle Star,
And let me see thine eye !
High thoughts, from self and sin afar,
We oft allow to die ;
But hearts, though earthy in th' extreme,
Dreams of a nobler life might dream,
Shone but the visible melody
Of thy converting beam.

Eyes are souls' tongues ; then let me hear
The soul that speaks through thee ;
Thou hast a speech of accent clear,
A solemn speech, for me :
And, were my spirit wild with hell,
The messages thy rays can tell
Should strike me calm,—like the clear toll
Of a religious bell.

It gleams ! It gleams ! The starry sprite
Its eyelids deigns to part ;
Swift shoots a wiry lance of light,
Straight tilting at my heart ;
It seems a friend to recognise,
Darts through the wide door of the eyes,
Falls on the soul's neck with a kiss
Of lovingest surprise !

Do stars weep ? Sure, to that star-twink
Some tear-fraught mist was given !—
How delicately doth it shrink
Back-lessening into heaven !
It seems about to quite depart ;—
Ah ! it leaps forward with a start,
Like the convulsed and desperate beat
Of a most suffering heart.

And it may weep ;—a star may weep,
Ay, spite of natural bars ;
For hath not earth woes deadly deep
Should e'en force tears from stars ?
It must be all creation's part
To fellow-feel with human smart,
While pity throbs in every beat
Of God's all-loving heart.

Yes ; stars may weep, God pity, yet
Men no compassion show,
And can most thoughtlessly forget
A brother's piteous throe ;
Are we not all too slow to heed
The bleeding of the hearts that bleed,
Too slow to feel each others' want,
And heal each others' woe ?

We fret our lives, we waste our souls,
For weary wealth or fame,
Yet die at last inglorious moles
Blind digging to our shame :—
For there's no glory, save to try
To wipe tears from another's eye,
And help his spirit to transcend
Each merely earthly aim.

MOUNT PERILOUS OF PRIDE.

*He sets truths in his fire to cook
Till they to falsehoods swell,
And some go pop with a spurious look,
And some with a curious smell.
Bring them to Book! Bring them to Book!
When once they burst the shell,
Easily twists the tongue acrook
That would true verdict tell.*

*His fire sends smoke the skies to kiss,
And all the skies rebel,
Lest shrink their countless homes of bliss
To a solitary cell.
Seest thou really naught amiss?
And stands his Mountain well?
Its edge is the brink of a precipice
Down falling sheer to hell!*

ABOVE the hills
Lit with the sun's bright flame ;
Over the rills
Always and never the same ;
Old as the old primeval heaven,
There is a home to him who finds it given,
Above the hills' sides, torrent-riven,
Above the valleys' shame.

Below, the winds lie crouch'd in their caves,
Like tigers ready for leaping ;
The clouds look down on the mournful earth
And cannot stay from weeping ;
The lightnings quiver, in bright wreaths curl'd,
Like fiery snakes half-sleeping ;
But nothing of these wots that high world,
Blest quiet ever keeping.

Leave wife or child, leave wealth or fame,
But leave that region not ;
So shall be all of shameful shame,
And trick of fate, forgot.
From thy soul, of thy sun's flame,
By valley-lust, no least ray be exiled ;
That shall be thy wealth and fame,
Shall be thy wife and child.

Though mine arm I made a girdle
About a maiden's waist ;
Though for my mouth mine eyes their utmost wit
Of eloquence had often tried, that it
Her innocent kiss might taste ;
Though look on look had, flowing, fix'd,
Souls utterly intermix'd,
Hearts' fibres interlaced,

And she said, if I forsook,
Life would forsake,
And well I knew that if I went
Her gentle heart would break ;
Yet if she led me to the vale,
From my sun-track kept me,
That that high land might accept me,
I must let her face grow pale,
And leave her there,
Nor could repent, although around
Her comely head the shroud it drew, and bound
Dark cypress in her hair.

I have sworn an oath, and I will keep it,
As Allah doth me save,
Nor, by His help, once will I overleap it
Until I keep my grave ;
Sworn that no pretext shall my soul seduce
To shear its brow of one fair lock of sun,
Nor will I down into those valleys run
By strong persuasion to false duty or use,
Of hundreds, or of one.

Yes, Messieurs, right well I hear you,—
Hear all your screamers say :—

'The wealthy man rides through the people's blood
Their bodies pave his way.

Will you not stimulate a sinking nation
To lift its voice aloud

For the swift riddance of that usurpation
Of few over the crowd ?'

What ! shall I praise the just and equal boat
Where crew, not captain, rules ?

Or risk the State on hazard of the vote
Of all its common fools ?

I will not tell that barefaced lie again,
That all are fashioned equal,

Nor say their politics to these blind men
Will bring the wish'd-for sequel.

I am no Radical,
Nor am I Whig or Tory ;

I am a lover of the Mount,
And of its wisdom hoary.

But why not join the wiser few who find
' A hungry people ' ever ' creeping nigher,'
Like ' lion ' glaring in its bestial ire
' At one that nods and winks behind
A slowly-dying fire' ?

In truth, methinks I see a grand new day
About to pour through the sun's burning lens ;

And day, when it arrives, must fright away
All night-beasts to their dens.
Already is it dawning ; and this day
Has virtues to all previous days unknown,
For even now the lion slinks away
To a new den of his own ;
That den already larger, cleaner grows ;
To a fresh type it fast approximates,
With maps upon the walls, and desks in rows,
And forms, and books, and slates.
So why not trust the lion ? Sharp the claws,
And fierce the teeth have been, and rough the hide ;
Trust him, and see how soon kind Nature's laws
Improvements will provide ;
Make the fangs soften and fall,
And new milk-teeth install ;
Make claws grow thin and small,
And for knife and scissors call ;
Make the rough hair be cast,
And leave clean skin at last ;
Make the frame change its plan,
The brain enlarge and strengthen,
The heart grow soft and mild,
The lower members lengthen,
And the beast stand up a mighty man
And harmless as a child.

Dreams, say you? Well, 'tis Allah's own affair
Democracy's His stream. We have to swim,
Or float, in what He sends us everywhere ;
Let us be glad that, after all, the care
And *onus* are on Him.
I am no Radical,
Nor am I Whig or Tory ;
I am a lover of the Mount,
And of its wisdom hoary.

Good sisters, urge me not. I see the tears
Those little children shed ;
The bitter cry sounds sadly in mine ears
From many a lingering bed ;
Heavenward I see the hungry turn their faces,
And still they are not fed ;
And mothers with yet ignorant embraces
Embrace their children dead.
Believe me, you than I are not more eager
To help mankind and save :—
Go ye, rescue those forms, so shrunk and meagre,
From the wide-wasting grave :
But neither do I waste a life in dreaming
Because I seem not to be helping you ;
I can be doing far, far more, while seeming
Far less, or naught, to do.

For on my Mountain one short hour
Plucking a fruit, culling a flower,
Must ever in the end
More blessing lend
Mankind,
Than long years spent below,
Wiping the tears that flow,
Loosing the chains that bind.

I have sworn an oath, and I will keep it,
As Allah doth me save,
Nor, by His help, once will I overleap it
Until I keep my grave ;
Sworn that no cold derisive smiling
Of foe, nor prayer of friend,
Nor loss of fame and honour, nor reviling,
Shall ever me my soul make lend
To what would cramp its wider aim,
Or maim
Its universal end.
High o'er the hills I'd live ; out from my heart
I cannot bear to thrust one beam divine ;
Choose you, then, for yourselves, your lot and part,
And I have chosen mine.

•

YOUNG LOVE.

WHAT's softer than a baby-wind new-born
Trying to kiss a whisper from a tree ?
More constant to man's heart than sound o' th' sea
To the curl'd inlet of a sea-shell's horn ?
What's quieter than death of flower forlorn,
Uprooted where the pitiless sun can see ?
Or facile weddings of the fragrant pea
That puts a ring on every fingery thorn ?
What's gentler than a young rill's murmurings
So softly singing through its meadow-ways ?
Or silenter than sun's unsparing gaze
The maiden blood in cherries' cheeks that brings ?—
O 'tis young Love ; for he a nest can raise
In hearts that never guess his busy wings.

'A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM.'

NO, Preacher, no !
Cease further to entreat.

I will not go
Those thorns, those flints to meet ;
They prick, they bruise my knees,
They wound my feet.

Let me alone !
That cruel, rough-hewn smart,
That solid groan,
Christ's Cross, makes me to start ;
It tears my arms, my breast,
Pierces my heart.

Some men are so
That from them goodness flows
Easy as glow
From star, or scent from rose ;
But I, alas, am not
At all like those.

Still am I young.
 What ! must my youth go waste ?
 To taste shall tongue
 Be made, and yet not taste ?
 Arms to embrace, yet joys
 Be unembraced ?

With looks that please,
 Allurement yonder stands ;
 And what are these
 That hold me ?—Woven sands
 To be despised by eyes,
 Brush'd off by hands !

Thus heart rebell'd
 One day, and claim'd wild range.
 But I beheld
 A little child. How strange
 Sin's sudden death ! That sight
 Wrought all the change.

LIFE, NOT DEATH.

A WAILING voice of prophecy,
A voice of anguish in our ears !
Why will ye tell us so, our fears,
That she must die ?

So fair she seems,
In wealth of womanhood so high,
How can it enter in our dreams
That our dear friend can die ?

Yet enters there the prophecy ;
It more than enters there,—it dwells !
That voice hath never ceased that tells
That she must die.

Let us not feign,
Let us not feign our eyes are dry ;
They weep an agonised rain
Because our friend will die.

Shall we not weep? Shall we not sigh?
Shall we not rather storm and curse
And rave against this Universe
That lets her die?

Nay, nay, be still,
Let us be still! Not you nor I
Should rave. Think, Friend, it is God's will
That lets our dear one die.

It is God's will! So let us try
Calmness once more. He knows the best.
Our dear one enters into rest,
But she shall never die.

MAN.

MAN doth usurp all space,
Stares thee in rock, bush, river, in the face.
Never yet thine eyes beheld a tree;
'Tis no sea thou seest in the sea,
'Tis but a disguised humanity.
To avoid thy fellow, vain thy plan;
All that interests a man is man.

FOR THE DESOLATE.

WHEN, though no loving accents fall
In snows upon thy parch'd brow,
Yet others unto others call
To give the kiss or breathe the vow,
Then let thy love for them beguile
The self-love that would in thee rise,
And bid a softly-welling smile
Warm once again thy frozen eyes.

When o'er thy brain the passion flows
And rolls into thine eyes its tears,
Because thy soul no solace knows
Of answering hopes and answering fears ;
Then dash thy tears down as they swell,
And give thy grief a strong control,
And with a stern derision quell
The rising anguish of thy soul.

When thy lone dreams sweet visions see,
And loving looks upon thee shine,
And loving lips speak joys to thee
That never, never may be thine ;
Then press thy hand hard on thy side,
And force down all the swelling pain ;
Trust me, the wound, however wide,
Shall close at last, and heal again.

Think not of what is from thee kept ;
Think, rather, what thou hast received :
Thine eyes have smiled, if they have wept ;
Thy heart has danced, if it has grieved.
Rich comforts yet shall be thine own ;
Yea, God Himself shall wipe thine eyes ;
And still His love alike is shown
In what He gives, and what denies.

TO A TRUE FRIEND.

BOUND I am to love you much
When the happy chords you touch ;
Worthier you to be loved best
When you make me angriest.

THE FLOWER-GARDEN OF GOD.

*His weeds, however gay, at last
Themselves into the oven cast ;
His flowers He doth for ever prize,
And none another may despise.*

LILY fair accused the Rose
Of most flagrant treason :—
‘ Hot red flower never blows
Heaven’s blessèd breeze on !
Change your hue, or sun and moon
And all earth will hoot you,
And the garden-hoe will soon
Visit and uproot you ! ’

The pale Primrose sharply blamed
The still paler Lily :—
‘ Sickly white and monstrous height
Make you look so silly !
Take my hint and get a tint,
Pallid flower unholy !
Ape no tree, but be, like me,
All compact and lowly.’

Harshly Crocus blue the doom
Of Primrose rehearses :—
'That pale bloom which you assume
Heaven justly curses !
Swiftly judgment must pursue
The audacious fellow
Who, while heaven's self is blue,
Ventures to be yellow !'

In its turn the Crocus by
Violet is abhorrèd :—
'Scentless bloom ! How sad your doom,
Well-deserved, though horrid !
Though you blue{are, you 're a weed
Oven shall devour ;
It is perfume that indeed
Shows the genuine flower !'

While each one of all the flowers
Thus is rashly giving :
To the rest not even an hour's
Right of longer living,
He who grows them, great or small,
Deems them none too many,
And says, smiling on them all,
'I can spare not any.'

TO S. N. F.

WERE my soul as a harp, apt to be moved
To magic cadences, O Friend beloved !
Were my soul as a harp, and might my hand
The cunning of enchanter's understand ;
Ah then, sweet Sister, then should all the air
And all the earth and the whole deep rich sea
My power feel ; that thence all things most fair,
Most beautiful, most like, dear Friend, to thee,
Might gather'd be ; such as, the fragrances
Wonderful of the flowers ; the splendid dyes
Shed by the western sun upon the skies ;
And from the mines, and from the agèd seas
Their selfish hoards of costliest jewelries ;
Added thereto, all the delicious sounds
Wherewith the feathery commonwealth abounds :
These should be fetch'd and magically blent
Into a glorious nectar ; in the which
I would embathe my fingers, that the scent
Might enter through the strings into the sound
Of the new music of mine instrument,—

A music thence so wonderful and rich
Ever should smiles spring in thy gentle eyes,
Smiles that must needs, for sweetness, end in tears ;
While more than mortal harmonies should rise
Majestic on the portals of thine ears,—
Harmonies beautiful, that through all years
Should rise, and deep into thy spirit pass,
That like might thus mingle with like.

Alas !

I have no harp so powerful, sweet Friend ;
I have no skill thus to make Nature lend
Her riches to the instrument I sway :
Yet Sister, O my Sister ! I can send
Petition to the Father, Who ne'er misses
To hear prayer for His loved ones ; I can pray,
And do, indeed, dear Sister, that with thine,—
Thy dearest, and thyself,—the hand Divine
May richly bide ; that so thy joys and blisses
As many as the stars of heaven may be,
Or as the kind thoughts my heart bears for thee !

HEMLOCK STONE.

[BRAMCOTE, NEAR NOTTINGHAM.]

THOU petrified enigma ! Question cold,
By Answer unespoused, though ask'd of old !
Hoary perplexity ! Deep mystery, done
Ages innumerable ago in stone !
When cam'st thou here ? What monstrous means
convey'd
Thee to this station ? What convulsion made
Thy red neck rear itself thus haughtily
Above the field ? What tempests sculptured thee ?
What ice-float brought thee here, a lonely rock ?
What wind-wolves howling after fleecy flock
Of clouds that 'fore them flee like frighten'd sheep,
And press, and crush, and on each other leap,
And in fast tears of rain, shed in their terror, weep,—
What packs of winds through earth and heaven that
range,
Gnaw'd thy old bulk into these features strange ?
Or was 't some insane flood that swept away
Thy womb of earth, and bared thee to the day ?

Or, in its waste and wildness, plough'd and surged,
And urged thee on, groaning to be so urged,
And set thee up, on this hill-side to stand,
By strongest of all hands—a liquid hand?—
'Tis thine a dark enigma to remain ;
'Tis mine to guess thee, and to guess in vain.

Well might the druid old bow down with awe,
And deem thee, when thy uncouth form he saw,
An altar cut by Nature's hand in stone,
That her God might be worshipp'd thereupon
More largely and in more majestic ways
Than on those lesser ones which mortals raise :
Well might he kindle on thine aged head
The mystic fire, and with lean arms outspread,—
His old hair feebly wandering out behind
Like tatter'd white flag shivering in the wind,—
Invoke the sanction of the gods to fall
Upon the solemn ceremonial,
While through his eyes wild liquid fire did flow,
And the harp trembled and the mistletoe ;
For to this hour, suggesting incense, thou
Still steadiest up a sacrificial brow ;
And although thou who wast, ages ago,
An awful altar, now art but a stone,
Yet let my song to God our Maker be
As solemn fire to rise once more from thee.

What eyes innumerable, O agèd stone,
Have gazed, and gazed, thine antique form upon !
The woad-dyed savage with his hunting spear
Has leapt and stared and wonder'd even here :
Haply the Roman soldier here has stood,
Stray'd from his camp far into the wild wood :
The monk, at least, on palfrey ambling past,
Shaken by the rough bridle-road, has cast
A hot glance on thee : the knight, steel-array'd,
A breathing moment near thy bulk has stay'd
To bid his squire behold : gay Cavalier
And solemn stern old Roundhead have been here :
Lovers and maidens : lords, and squires, and pages :
Serf, farmer, village-fool. Ages on ages
Of human life hast thou seen onward glide.
At last I stand upon thy wither'd side,
Another drop of that still-flowing tide.

Yes ; man in intermittent stream hath flow'd
By thee for ages on the neighbouring road ;
And mortal hearts successive here have beat
That now beat nowhere. On thy velvet seat
Still stand'st thou solemn : that long multitude
Away hath faded, whilst thou, unsubdued
By all those ages, hast made good thy claim
To hold this station, and art still the same.

We change ; we vanish ; thou, defying fate,
Stand'st in thy antique sameness obstinate ;
Like the huge head, sore battered and time-ridden,
Of sphinx whose body 'neath the earth is hidden ;
Or like a statue of drear Desolation,
Rock-carven by some old, mad, plague-smit nation,
Dying by hundreds ; or, like ancient Lear,
With wither'd weed on thine old head for hair ;
But dead, stone-stiffen'd, not of any daughters
Raving, drown'd, ages since, in ravenous waters ;—
Alas, thou canst not rave, nor speak, nor see ;
Thou canst but stand in giant idiocy.

Now speaks one tongue for both ; few years shall run
Their course, and it will lack words even for one ;
And here, where now my flesh speaks, on this sod,—
A clod that moves, to an unmoving clod,—
Others shall muse, in ages yet to come,
And thou be spoken to, when it is dumb ;
And thine old bulk be gazed at, even as now,
When it is cold,—as dull a thing as thou !

And thou shalt stand, beautiful times among ?
Ah hadst thou any to-be-trusted tongue,
I might perchance entreat thee to convey
Some message down to that high-favour'd day,

To say that even in hours so stormy-sad
Were some whose eyes saw their day and were glad,
And from these deeps of ancient woe and crime
Help'd to achieve for them that better time.

Lo ! how it rises, rises on mine ears, —
The mighty music of those unborn years !
The billows of that song-sea, how they roll
Extravagantly on into my soul !
He comes, by all God's royal bards foresung,
By pining ages waited for so long !
The Christ in man received, for whom her brow
The world hath knit in pain, and groan'd till now !
He comes for you, ye poor ; ye weak, pursue
Your glad hosannas, for He comes for you ;
For poor, for rich, for weak, for strong, He's given,
To make of earth a fitting floor for heaven.

HERESY.

THE novel doctrine may be right,
 Spite of these cries of danger :—
The best yard-dogs will bark and bite
 Alike at every stranger.

WOMAN.

WEAK souls, self-prison'd, scorn their cells,
And leap forth freed, when Woman's nigh;
Sweet speech, like music-making bells,
Rings changes in her thoughtful eye,
Glad joy-peals, or slow-tolling knells
With echoes from on high.

Magic and forceful fires in these,—
A woman's smiles, a woman's tears;—
Kind furnace fires that can unfreeze
Hearts bound in arctic ice for years;—
Flames that can ravish whom they seize,
And lift to heavenly spheres.

Their bliss, from her who nobly seek
And get, to sweet hope, meet reply,
No traitorous soul can ever speak,
Or even in far-off thought descry;—
Too blest, for whom first glows her cheek,
And speaks new tongues her eye!

Talk not of beauty ; love will lie
Where beauty never boasts to dwell ;
Love lighted purely from on high,
With sweet good sense and truth as well,
These, looking forth from Woman's eye,
Can weave the strongest spell.

'Tis said, indeed, that Love decays
When altar-oaths have join'd the hands ;
That there's no talismanic phrase
Can hold him in enduring bands ;—
Yes ! and when drouth the deer dismays,
They flee to other lands ;—

Yes ! and the frost-offended bird
Mourns, and at length away it hies ;—
Yes ! and the unkind deed or word,
Cold whispers from unloving eyes,
When these by Love's fine ear are heard,
What wonder if he flies ?

Love, when by the contracting heart
He's pinch'd and fretted, off may go ;
The plumage fledging Cupid's dart
To strong-quill'd wings, in frost, can grow,—
Wings yet reluctant to depart,
Slow waving to and fro.

O most God-worthy gift, to bless
The earth with gracious overflow !
Thou, Woman, art true prophetess
Of every heaven man shall know. —
Ye who her priceless love possess,
Oh never let it go !

ALADDIN.

TO take the ring humility, and use,
Becomes thee not, Aladdin, to refuse,
No matter though thine enemy it be
By whom that true self-knowledge comes to thee ;
Nor shalt thou scorn into the vault to go ;—
For thee the lamp of wisdom lies below.

Pluck thou the fruits that grow on either hand,
Although as yet thou mayst not understand
Their real nature. To thy present sense
Each seems, perhaps, a vain experience,
But thou to-morrow each a gem shalt see
Cheapening the sultan's signet-ring to thee.

CIRCLES.

THE acorn, earth-trodden,
Grows pulpy and sprouts with the rain ;
Up springs the young oak
From seed with might and with main ;
Its fructified top
Comes, lastly, to acorns again.

The child's top lies quiet
Asleep and inert on the ground.
Wind the string, spin the top,
See the toy how it whirls round and round,
Fast, faster, and faster,
Until it again sleeps sound,
And motion excessive
Joins hands with repose most profound.

Like rain weeps the mother
In pain for her fever-struck boy ;—
The fever abating,
Hope gives her eyes other employ ;—
Him quite out of danger
Ere long she'll weep over for joy.

Weak, bald, deaf, and blind,
The child comes, pity to crave ;—
Stands erect the young man,
Quick, competent, active, and brave ;—
Weak, bald, deaf, and blind,
Old age totters over the grave.

SORROW.

THE flowers live by the tears that fall
From the sad face of the skies,
And life would have no joys at all
Were there no watery eyes.

Love thou thy sorrow : grief shall bring
Its own excuse in after years :—
The rainbow !—see how fair a thing
God hath built up from tears.

THE ARBOUR.

SILENT sits the gentle Evening on the meads
With her twilight-retinue ;
And on grassy threads she strings her dewy beads
Yet scantily and few,
While her soft breaths give a tremble to the weeds
And a tremble to the dew.

She hath faintly both the sun and moon display'd
On the grey flag that she rears,
And the dimness of her dark hair shoots a shade
Through the light that disappears
Very slowly from her features, all array'd
In loveliness and tears.

But what shall be her beauty when compared
With the human presence fair
Of the maiden sitting silent in the bower
On the quaint and rustic chair,—
The beads impaled upon her lashes,
And the darkness in her hair?

With high hand to the mastery of the bowe
Climbing clematis lays claim,
But the honeysuckle's rivalry is bold
And eager for the same ;
And Annie sits as motionless as picture
In a flower-abounding frame.

Unfinish'd lies her broidery on the table,
And the needle is at rest,
For her eyes are on the light-absorbing clouds
That gather in the west,
And her hands, uplifted, unaware are pressing
The Book upon her breast.

What is it she has done, this gentle maiden,
To entitle her to tears ?—
Ah, feeble lies her father in his chamber,
And Annie has such fears
As scarcely could she bring herself to whisper
Into kindest angel's ears.

How still she sits ! Scarce may you see her breathe !
And let your feet, I pray you, still be shod
With silence ;—noiseless be as moth on flower,
Or earthworm in the sod ;—
Intrude not on the sorrow that is seeking
The comfortings of God.

WILFORD BOAT.

[NEAR NOTTINGHAM, 1848.]

WHAT, my good friend, Ferry-boat
Still in being? Still afloat?
Still an engine to convey
Me across Trent's watery way?
Still a moving bridge to glide
Steadily from side to side?
Still a bark to carry over
Idle or laborious rover,
Cottager, or bard, or lover?—
More debts even than I know
Unto this good Boat I owe,
Which hath help'd me, boy and man,
Oft to fields Elysian ;—
Wilford Bank and Clifton Grove,
Lovely haunts which lovers love ;—
To the wildest gardens, where
I have breathed enchanted air,
And amid the wondering trees
Watch'd the fairies' revelries.

Oberon I have seen, I swear,
And the sweet Titania, there ;
And the Lady Mab, besides,
Who in mossy cleft abides ;
And the trickster Puck, who glides
Long green leaves of arum under,
To enjoy the start of wonder
And the eyelids wide asunder
Thrown, when some sly sound he gives,
And the wanderer deceives :—
Now it is a splash, and now
'Tis the noise of cracking bough ;
Or a whistle, shrill and lonely ;
Or a sound of footstep only,
With the which to fool and cheat
The traveller : then in retreat
Falls, with smother'd laughs, the elf,
'Gainst the stem still props himself,
And though still he slyly hides,
Arum shakes, as shake his sides.

Wilford Bank and Clifton Grove,
Lovely land that lovers love,
Yes, full many fine enjoyments
I have had there ; sweet employments ;

Flower-gatherings ; recollections
Of the Queen of my affections ;
High poetic gleams and fancies ;
Smiling hopes and rich romances ;
For all which I am in debt
To this good Boat : wherefore let
Time and chance look kindly on it,
And its days sit light upon it ;
Be its solid timbers long
Serviceably hale and strong,
And the fates its final date
To old age procrastinate ;
Guarding safe its privileges
From upstart usurping bridges.

On the chain the pillar grates ;
Shut, behind, the watery gates,
Ope before to let us through.
We have one man for our crew,
And two passengers has he.
Free, yon seat, for me and thee.
But if child thou sawest here,
Or a woman, plain or fair,
Hoary matron or young maiden,
Or a man heavily laden
With his years, or with a basket,
Shouldst not wait until he ask it ;

Shouldst not sit to let her sue thee ;
Hard that seat should seem unto thee
Till thou didst its service press
On them with frank courteousness ;
Age or weakness,—’twere scarce fitting
These should stand and thou be sitting !

Here have stood how many feet !
Here how many hearts have beat
O’er this deck ! This selfsame Boat
’Twixt two running streams doth float,—
O’er and under ;—for, below,
Watery, and, above, doth flow
Human tide. Ages ago
Two streams at this ferry ran,—
River Trent and river Man.

The other notch must now receive
This handle. Good friend,—with your leave ?—
Thank you ! Trust me, I must grieve
On your comfort to intrude ;—
Need compels me to be rude ;—
Here till midnight must we stay
Till the helm be put this way.

Nearer now yon whiten’d walls
Beckon, and the old church calls

Us with other voice than bell :
So bid we this Boat farewell.—
Farewell! Aye, and dear to me
Memory of this Boat shall be,—
Boat, upon whose actual wood
Dear feet, sacred feet, have stood ;
Feet of gracious, feet of good,
Feet of noble Sister sweet,
At whose name beloved must beat
Fresher pulses, and a heat
Must the eyes fill, and a sound
Musical the ears ; and round
Heart the kind thoughts cluster thick
As, round magnet, grains of steel,—
As, round queen-bee, swarm-bees quick.
Thou 'rt far with thy loved one ; still
Not so far but I can feel
Thine effect as lowly calm,
Sweet as sound of solemn psalm ;
And an influence stealing o'er me ;
And a light that gleams before me ;
And a voice urging to press
On to real holiness,
Nor relax the labour now
Till I be as pure as thou !

Yes, that noble heart hath been
Even here ; those eyes have seen,—
Gentle eyes,—this very scene ;
Her foot trod this plank ; was set
Even here : sprang violet
And the primrose as she stepped,
Surely ; and the hard earth leapt
To be so happied !—

Dearest Boat !

Wert thou richest bark afloat ;
Were thy nails of solid gold,
All thy deck with silver roll'd,
And complete in luxury ;
Still, I could not look on thee
With that special admiration,
With that something love and passion,
Wherewith, when thy planks I view,
Now for her sole sake I do.

Truly I did well to pray
Time and chance, from day to day,
That they might look kindly on thee,
And thy years sit light upon thee,
And thy solid timbers long
Serviceable be and strong,

And the fates thy final date
To old age procrastinate ;
Guarding safe thy privileges
From upstart, usurping bridges !

WHO SHALL DELIVER?

HE spake ;—from vanity, it seem'd to be ;
Was silent ; still he saw 'twas vanity
He own'd his vainness ; vanity took possession
Of that most sad confession.
He vow'd to kill the weed, and strove to do 't,
And hew'd and hack'd down to the very root :
Alas, rank vanity would still be thriving
And prosp'ring even in that very striving.
Then fell he down and pray'd :—*Lord, take my breath,
And save me from the body of this death.*

A DREAM OF THE SEA FOAM.

I.

WE stood, both silent, by the sounding sea.
The waves, like lips about to speak, did rise,
Yet shrewdly kept the secret ; and the wise
Sky o'er us told not our hearts' destiny.
Ah, had the future then by me and thee
Been but divined, with what endear'd surprise
Should we have gazed into each other's eyes
And loved, even for the love that was to be !
The very flints thou troddest would have been
Dear for the time's sake when more dear they'd grow
For thy sake,—when thy heart on mine would lean
As then thine arm on mine did.—Nay, not so,
Dearest, not so ! Our arms were link'd to sever ;
But when our hearts united, 'twas for ever.

.II.

Then, arm on arm ; now, heart in heart ; ah why
Not arm on arm now, too ? Why should the dear
So seldom be the near ? Why are the near,
Alas, not always dear ? Earth doth supply
Too many who the human form degrade.
And yet love blesses all, if love is true ;
And, since we love each other, I and you
Doubtless are lending them some hidden aid.
Yet 'tis a grief that to these plenteous men,—
Too plenteous—I may go, and not to thee ;
So now I mourn for what I prized not then,
And own that now most bless'd seems to me
That time, which seem'd not so at that time, when
We stood, both silent, by the sounding sea.

*'THOUGH HE SLAY ME, YET WILL I
TRUST IN HIM.'*

WHAT if I perish, after all,
And lose this life, Thy gracious boon?
Let me not fear that I shall fall
And die too soon.

I cannot fall till Thou dost let,
Nor die, except at Thy command.
Low let me lie, my Father, yet
Beneath Thy hand.

'Tis good to think, though I decrease,
Thou dost not, Lord, decrease with me.
What matters it that I must cease,
Since Thou must be?

The life Thou willedst me I use
To thank Thee for that gracious will ;—
If I must lose it, I would choose
To thank Thee still.

No more might I lift prayerful eyes,
Or sway a tongue to grateful tones ;
Yet should a noise of praise still rise
Even from my bones.

LOVE'S PENALTY.

ALAS, the pains a man may bear from foes !
Alas, ten times alas, the flood of woes
Which to the lover from his loved-one flows !
Yet thank God for thy love, e'en though it be
As very gall for bitterness to thee.

A PREACHER'S SOLILOQUY AND SERMON.

THE SOLILOQUY.

WHAT wealth to earth our God hath given !
 What growing increment for heaven !
 Men, women, youth, and children small,
 I thank the good God for you all !

Not always was it mine to give
 Such high regard to all who live ;
 Time was, I know, when I could go
 Along the streets and scarcely see
 The presences my God did show
 So lavishly to me.
 Around my steps,—before, behind,—
 They His creative power declared ;
 I only heeded them, to find
 The easiest path, as on I fared.
 And even the innocent little ones,
 Of value high o'er stars and suns,—
 Evangelists, by Heaven's decree,
 Commission'd truths to teach to me

That likewise I had never known,—
They seem'd young foreigners to be,
They never seem'd mine own.
How could I be so dull and blind ?
How dared I slight God's humankind ?

I know ye nothing care for me ;—
Each to each deep mysteries,
We cannot guess what we may be
Except by what a glance can seize.
Perchance we never met before,
Meet now the first and final time,
Yet are ye mine, over and o'er,
That, haply, I may help you climb
To Jesus, up the mount divine.
Oh might such high success be mine !
Fain would I couch your vision dim ;
Fain would I lead you up to Him !

Nay, nay, I cannot yield up one—
No little child, no youth, no man ;
I cannot say, Depart from me ;
I cannot say, Begone, begone,
I have no part in thee.

No part? But how? Do I not love you?

Is not this title still more strong
 Than if I'd bought you all with gold?—
 Love strenuous flies, a spirit above you;
 Try to escape, it will outfly you,
 It will embrace, ay, and defy you
 To break away its gentle hold.
 Because God's love is swift and strong,
 Therefore ye all to me belong.

Why do I dare love all mankind?

'Tis not because each face, each form

Is comely, for it is not so;

Nor is it that each soul is warm

With any Godlike glow.

Yet there's no one to whom's not given

Some little lineament of heaven,

Some partial symbol, at the least, in sign

Of what should be, if it is not, within,

Reminding of the death of sin

And life of the Divine.

There was a time, full well I know,

When I had not yet seen you so;

Time was, when few seem'd fair;

But now, as through the streets I go,
There seems no face so shapeless, so
Forlorn, but that there's something there
That, like the heavens, doth declare
The glory of the great All-fair ;
And so mine own each one I call ;
And so I dare to love you all.

Glory to God, who hath assign'd
To me this mixture with mankind !
Glory to God, that I am born
Into a world, whose palace-gates
So many royal ones adorn !
Heaven's possible novitiates,
With self-subduing freedom free,
Princely ye are, each one, to me,
Each of secret kingly blood,
Though not inheritors as yet
Of all your own right royal things,
For it were folly to forget
That they alone are queens and kings
Who are the truly good.
Yet are ye angels in disguise,
Angels who have not found your wings ;
I see more in ye than ye are
As yet, while earth so closely clings ;

As through a cloud that hides the skies
 Undoubting science hails a star
 Not to be seen by other eyes,
 Yet surely among things that are,
 So the dense veil of your deformities
 Love gives me power away to pull.
 Alas ! why will ye not from sin arise,
 And be Christ's beautiful ?

THE SERMON.

Ho ! every one that thirsts, draw nigh, draw nigh !
 The drink I offer, Christ's own words supply.
 Ho ! every one that thirsts not, thirst, I cry ;
 Why will ye still neglect to drink,—and die ?
 See, here are living wells ; why will ye scorn ?
 Ye unborn, why refuse ye to be born ?
 I call you to repent, oh hear my call !
 Doth my voice reach you, through the stiff cere-clothes
 That do enshroud and wrap you up withal ?
 Doth my shout come, a whisper in your ears,
 As sounds might, travell'd from far distant spheres,
 Into the ravell'd windings of a cave ?
 O then turn down those cerements of the grave
 From round about your ears ;

Let my voice be as thunder ; let it roll
 Into each wakening soul ;
Come forth, O Lazarus ! when I say so
Deem me a way wherethrough Christ's mandates flow,
And let each buried one attend, and know
The stone is roll'd away ; Christ calls to him below.
Come forth, O Lazarus ! when I say so,
Let where it lists His Holy Spirit blow,
Until each Lazarus comes forth, and know
Christ only waits to say—Loose him, and let him go !
His voice delights to set all prisoners free ;
His blood, His truth, makes all sin white as wool ;
Oh hear ! Oh wash you, cleanse you, and so be
 Christ's own, Christ's beautiful !

LOVE.

LOVE is, if Benedict may be trusted,
 Mere selfishness behind a mask removed :
Ah, Benedict, then, has liked, perhaps, and lusted,
 But never, never loved !

A LOVE-LETTER.

NO ; I cannot thank the care
That my feelings sought to spare.
Not compliment with compliment
Should deal, but man with man. You meant
To save me pain, and therefore bent
The truth aside. This goes, my friend,
Of all true love to make an end.

Do you love me ? Come then nigh me ;
Prick me, man ! Never relent !
Cut and hack and scarify me ;—
If the truth can make me sore
Let me be a wound all o'er :—
Do this but with pure intent,
I am

Yours

For evermore.

CLIFTON GROVE GARLAND.

TO ELIZA SUTTON.

*Thou know'st how I, a child, twined wreaths of flowers
And weeds—for thee, a child too,—in gone hours
Of dear romance. Another Wreath is here
Made, still, of flowers and weeds. Around the dear
Presentment, I have woven it, of thy brow,
That they who shall behold this Garland now,
Seeing my hand thereon, may also see
Thy head therein, and at once mindful be
Of me, the weaver, and the wearer, thee.*

CLIFTON GROVE GARLAND.

I.

THE WALK.

FIELDWARD, in silent thought, I took my way.

Sweet was the air, magnificent the day,
The country all with invitation gay.
The meadows, whose expanse in season boasts
Of crocus-flowers innumerable hosts
That by the children's happy hands attain,
Through all the town, near every window-pane,
Extension of their purple proud domain,
I, quickly passing, hastened my descent
To where the chain is stretch'd across the Trent,
'Gainst which the upright iron pillar press'd,
Grates, turning in its sockets, to arrest
The vessel's downward glide, and with least loss
Of time and space control its course across.
The voyage over, I walk'd on awhile
By a sweet way which flowers help'd to smile
And trees shed shadow for :—first, by a plot
Of churchyard grass at Wilford, o'er the spot
Where Kirke White's willow once was; then between
Twin rows of elms, like servitors, all green

With Spring's fresh favours :—afterwards across
The village green, over whose centre toss
Old arms of sycamore, and with a fence
Of garden'd cots for a circumference :—
Then on a bank whose wrinkled elm-boughs spread
An interference green betwixt the head
Of wayfarer and the unbashful sun :—
And thus on by fresh pasture, yearly won
And lost, by the alternate discontent
And shrinking weakness of old warrior Trent ;—
Then gently to the right, to where are seen
Two pillars, with a gate and bridge between,
Made for patrician uses, and a plank
Or so, hand-rail'd, to serve the meaner rank
Of feet plebeian :—thereby going on
To the last stile the Grove's precincts upon :—
A walk thereafter, still more glorious made
With yellow lights and changeful verdurous shade,
Near umber tree-boles mossily reprieved
From utter brown ; and branches freshest-leaved
Humouring the pettish little winds, by swinging
Ever themselves ; and shaded coverts, ringing
With feather-throated voices sweet proclaiming
The morning's joy :—a walk, thence constant aiming
To kiss the river's side, and oft succeeding
In its perverse intent ; me sometimes leading

Under or over a wind-ruin'd tree
Whose still green tresses dabbled mournfully
In the swift stream that flow'd o'er half its head,
And whose lorn fingers, witlessly outspread,
Comb'd alway the dark river's flowing hair,
And idly took a floating tollage there
Of straws and reeds :—a walk whereo'er did stray,
In other parts, rootlets across the way,
Emboss'd above the red, branch'd manifold,
Like wandering veins on arm of gypsy old :—
With now and then such roaming for the eye,
Such gush of landscape, such broad scenery,
Wide water-lapse with dark wind-crimpings grooved,
And green enrippled shades, and whites that moved
In twisting eddies in it, swirling o'er it
At every zephyr's instance ; and, before it,
Round, and beyond it, such a green and grey,
Such blue-deep rapture in the far-away,
Such a quick pleasure-presence of the light
Exalting all things, dawn'd out to the right,
As would have ta'en possession of the eye
And it indentured to long truancy,
But that it still was summon'd back by old
Feet-tripping roots, whose snaky bodies bold
Bulged o'er the path, letting the moss to green
Their surface gaunt, and to be feathery in

Each age-drawn furrow. Such a walk, I say,
Had ta'en me, by a long and happy way,
Past where we've laugh'd o'er many a violet-prize,
And quoted of 'the lids of Juno's eyes ;'
Past Kirke White's Island, to its willowy head,
Above which, to the land tether'd and wed
A promontory was by isthmus-band,
On which the gold marsh-marigold did stand
With wealth of fragrant mint on either hand.

II.

THE SEAT IN THE GROVE.

WATERWARDS stoop'd a willow there, and bore
Its elbow'd root a-kimbo from the shore :
There sat I, joyfully. Oh what a strain
Of the eye's music vibrated the brain !
Fix'd were the heavens above me all in blue,
As if they could not dream of other hue ;
And the pure clouds were still, self-gather'd in,
Round, solid-seeming, and edged clear and clean,
Save where it look'd as though some hand had been,—

Some angel's fingers,—loosening their white hair,
Out-combing it upon the azure air.
Behind me, branch above branch tiptoe tried
Which should hold highest up its leafy pride
Above the green bank's high receding side ;
A crumbling bank, to whose red substance moor'd
By many a delicate-intruded cord
Were hosts of field forget-me-nots, which made
A sapphire light far through the deep green shade ;—
Forget-me-not, the lover's blue-eyed pet,
Whose name he prays his love not to forget,
When he has spoken it, until she dies ;—
Forget-me-not, the flower that always lies
Dearest unto the maiden's gentle bosom ;—
The flower about whose sweet refreshful blossom
The sweetest little stars of yellow hue
Shine, each from its own private heaven of blue,
Till stars on stars, and skies on skies, uplifted
On rough-leaved stems, unite over the rifted
Red mother-earth. Ah, what a heavenly calm
Blue eye they make the bank to smile with ! Psalm
By minster-choir sung, can not more praise
God's goodness than these flowers do, when they raise
Their cheerful faces for the love of day.
This bank was further wed, far and away,

To widths of greenness other than of grasses :
Oft clubb'd together were thick nettley masses
Of deep green spitefulness ; loth, I'll be bound,
No fairest hand to grieve. Meanwhile, around,
The deeply cover'd and disguis'd ground,
Muffled close in a lighter green, receives,
In lesser celandine's heart-hinting leaves,
A jaundice from the hot increasing sun,
To atone for yellow blossoms o'er and done.
Herb-Robert, too, by his mild reds is seen
Amid the sapphire and the varied green ;
Sapphire and green, which the red campion tries
To make ev'n yet cooler to the eyes
By contrast of his hot and vivid dyes.
Meanwhile some fairy,—Puck himself, mayhap,—
Hath in green sheath wake-robin tried to wrap,
And stuck him for a feather in earth's cap ;
But the sport comes undone ; for, upward pointing
His shrouded treasures for the light's anointing,
Already is his vesture part unfurl'd.
I caution thee, wake-robin, that the world
Tempt thee not from beneath that nettle's shade ;
For never child who once thee has survey'd
At but a moment's glance, but straight will tear
Thy lush envelopment, to lay all bare
The ruddy treasures now half-hidden there.

Here, too, is speedwell, heaven-blue darling small,
Germander speedwell, frailest flower of all.
Out go its little hands toward holy heaven :—
What hath it done ? What needs it be forgiven ?
Why this appeal to the all-loving skies ?
Here too, with melancholy memories, rise
Those many verdant cenotaphs, the leaves
Of dear departed violets. Spring yet grieves
Their early passage from this fleeting state,
And leaving of their green homes desolate.
A little higher, roots of silverweed
Soft silky tongues are thrusting up, to feed
On the new air, and taste the spring-tide sun ;
And here ground ivy hiddenly doth run,
Blooming in budded blues along the ground.
Here, too, are many other treasures found,
The flower-jewels of the banks and fields
And lonely places ; such as Nature yields
To all her friends. But now, what shall I say
About the birds, and their melodious play ?
About the trees, that ripen'd every hour
Maturer shadow for this wandering bower ?
About the sunshine, streaming down the side
Of this and that tree which it glorified ?
About the vagrant bees, that came along,
Each with his scrip, and burly beggar's song ?

About the glorious dragon-flies, that threw
Hither and thither their four wings, and drew
Blue lustre from the sun with their bright bodies blue?
And then, what a most comfortable note,
How snug and cosy, gurgled in the throat
Of the wood-pigeons; making one to find
A sort of fire-side feeling in the mind
Of warm'd delight and dear home-friendliness,—
Not quite without a hint, nevertheless,
Of sweetly smother'd moaning in the tone;—
A grief that Comfort deems her very own.
Just so is 'Thank God' sharpened with 'Alas,'
When round the fire we sit at home, and pass
The happy glance, then for one moment think
How delicate our joy; o'er what a brink
It leans; for that the faces which we just
Look'd on so gratefully, are only dust
At one remove;—but instantly the sadness
Glides back into the trusting, loving gladness.—
To special notice, too, must have fair claim
That liquid mention of the cuckoo's name
Which fitfully from off the island came;
Whereat I said, Are there no wood-gods now?
The fairies, do they never lift a brow
Curious, from behind a branch o'erbent
To lick with its green tongues the soft-hair'd Trent?

Else I might think, upon some up-swoll'n root
In yonder isle, a mellow two-holed flute
Some fay or dryad hidden sat and play'd,
While cleverly self-hidden in the shade.
But, chief of all, note now how gently flow'd
With a broad body down his reedy road,—
As though in haste, anxious to be caressing
Those isles just by there, made for his possessing,—
That mid-link of a triple chain, whose ends
Are cloud and ocean, his enduring friends,
From and to whom he borrows and he lends,—
That preacher of Time's lapse, aye eloquent,—
That liquid present participle, Trent,
Passing, ne'er past. How gently down he went !
With what a dreamful whisperiness possest,
Mist-like arising from the restless rest
Of water-cords gush'd out along his breast ;—
How tenderly his stream flow'd, with the sky
Deep in its bosom,—as might sink and lie
A blessing in the heart of duteous child !
Flags from his breast, too, would not be exiled ;—
Nor fish, soft-gliding, waving their light fins ;—
Sometimes a gallant way one of them wins,
Maugre the stream, with tremblings of his sides ;
Anon his fork'd helm he turns, and glides

Off to his fellows in the deeper stream ;
Then back again as swiftly, with a gleam
Of his white flashing side ; then up he rises
Sometimes, and with a hungry leap surprises
The surface into waves and drops, which, falling,
And on the sun for recognition calling,
Are turn'd to special gold before they sink,
And leave a ripple which the river's brink
Might soon feel swelling to its shoremost sedge,
But the ridged currents cut it with their edge
And plane it down. While thus the river roll'd,
Beyond it many a field wide place did hold,
Joyful to show its wealth of green and gold ;—
Green, of the grasses, which were now just fledging
Their waving ears unto a flossy edging ;
And gold, of dandelions, fiercely burning
Against the sun, whose anger was fast turning
Into white blindness their presumptuous gaze.
Kingcups were there, too, with their gentler blaze,
Shining back softly on the shining sun,
Like gratitude on service kindly done.
Afar off, to the left, confusedly, all
A-row, nine poplars stood,—nine sentries tall
Guarding the farmer's stacks and stead and stall,
Rustling their plumes o'er the thin-shadow'd field ;
And, opposite, the church at Beeston held

Its little turret on its manly shoulder,
As father might his child, to be beholder
Of some far spectacle. Many a home
Half-cover'd from the eye by the green foam
Of foliage toss'd up by vague winds, was set
About the distant meadows. Thus I let
Mine eyes drink the ripe vintage of the scene
In various draughts of blue, and grey, and green ;
Pleased,—yet sad, so little to be free
To accomplish what so strongly yearn'd in me.

III.

THE MUSING HOUR.

FOR have we not oft said,—‘ To whom ’tis given
To be, for Art’s pure sake, entirely shriven
Of other work, how blest !—to whom ’tis lent
To put off from their feet all detriment,
And stand for ever on Art’s holy ground ? ’—
What favour, to be lost, and only found
By fellow-worshippers, enrapt amid
The symbols and the mystic meanings hid

In Nature's core ;—sometimes in some huge tree
To stretch out glorious arms, a shield to be
To timorous flowers ; or, in a stream on-sliding,
To fill one's groovèd saddle, and be riding
On subject earth ; or in a cloud to mount,
And see the river Morn gush at its fount,
Before its flood the skies hath overswum ;
Or in a mountain to stand, old, and dumb,
And many-climèd ; or in a vale to lie
All green and beauteous 'neath the Maker's eye ;
Thus to run through all the amazing range
Of form, hue, sound ; being and seeing,—strange
Yet truly,—blended into one ; till, fired
Inly, one wrought out with a hand inspired
Some glorious stone or picture, or indited
Poems or anthems glorious : so, delighted,
Live on, holding one's self in full requited
For faithful work, by finish'd work's assoyl ;
And at the last turn humbly from the toil
To say, ' O Lord, burnt out is all the oil
Thou fill'dst this lamp of life with ! '—while around
The bow'd head, ' *Well done, servant good !* ' should
 sound.

For the true Poet pares not his work's claws,
Nor draws its teeth, to humour fashion's laws ;

Nor thaws, like slug, neath critic salt, to fall
And melt to an unmeaning slimy scrawl :—
Nor is it to be Artist, to be loud
Crying one's wares, and pushing in the crowd ;
To hang the head and faint, because there 's none
But the great GOD to smile, and say ' Well done ! '
To peep o'er this man's shoulder, and feel mad
If he excel ; or to turn meanly glad
At passing that man ; thus with envy swelling
Of others, or with pride at self's excelling ;—
To fret and fever, for that popular praise
Doffs not its lackey-cap, nor Raleigh plays,
Cloak-carpetwise, to our Elizabeth ;—
No :—'tis to hang upon the holy breath
Of Nature's teachings, and to stretch the mind
As a string to be play'd by, of each wind
Of sincere impulse, the imperial finger ;
It is, to cast all else away, to linger,
A glowing lifetime through, at the great wells
Beside whose sacred runnings beauty dwells,
And flowers of self-sacrifice aye live ;
It is, with love and reverence, to give
Room in us for the Maker, and to spend
Life wholly 'mid the influences which lend
Strange power of creation to the creature ;
It is to give back Nature's each true feature,

And glass her surfaces by the control
Of that which shapes them,—their interior soul ;
It is to make perfection our election,
And, choosing that, to aim at that perfection ;
So to accomplish a right worthy thing
And be a world-enricher ; than a king
More glorious, though his fighting flag unfurl'd
Bore on it all the escutcheon of a world ;—
Only less glorious than is he whose strife
Is to perfect, not merely Art, but Life.

We know, full well, how oft bread-getting need
Spoils all ; how oft necessity, indeed,
The neck of many a crowing purpose wrings ;
And breaks up costliest harps, and makes their strings
Tie parcels, or converts them, one by one,
To cords to hang out vulgar clothes upon ;
And baulks the Muse of many a golden voice
That should have left age after age no choice
But to be glad for, which our streets must find
Now singing toys to sell or knives to grind :—
Call it not cruel : hard it seems ; but still
It is not cruel, if it is GOD's will.
If thou know'st any one who mid the flowers
Which the birds sing to in their sunny hours

May not thus live, nor be as I have said,
Haply it is because he could not wed
Art, without suffering loss. Had rain and sun
Been giv'n, perhaps his ground had overrun
With dark and hateful weeds of vanity.
'Tis true, he never now the fount shall see
Wherefrom all mighty poets influence draw,
To sing to deathless time the primal law ;
Yet may he just as well fulfil his day,
And do his work as faithfully, as they.

IV.

*SEDLEY GROVE.*¹

THUS flow'd thought, and the Trent flow'd, and the
time ;
Until had ceased the unharmonic chime
Of feather'd flutes ; no finny sporter leapt ;
For the hot afternoon had, king-like, kept
For some time now the throne whereon, at last, he slept.
Whether the heat made me also to doze
And dream, or not, that man may tell who knows ;

¹ See *Childhood of Mary Leeson*, by Mary Howitt.

But, all at once, the place had changed its style
From Clifton Grove, to Sedley ; and the isle—
The largest of the three above whose heads
The river broaden'd by me,—two, mere beds
Of osiers, but the third a glassy plain,—
Was Mary Leeson's empire once again.
Sudden I heard owls' bass tu-whits, which seem'd
To multiply behind me ; and there scream'd
The treble of some mystic chanticleer ;
And dogs' barks and sheep's bleatings took my ear.
A moment's wonderment, and then loud laughter
Its merry gamut ran ; and, soon thereafter,
I saw inside a boat upon the Trent
Two pairs of white shirt-sleeves, alternate bent
At elbow and then straighten'd out again,
In which were thrust the stout arms of two men,
Whose heads over their crooked knees stoop'd low
One instant, and, the next, jerk'd back to throw,
With tight-held breath, weight on the oar, whose pull
Against the current, makes the boat, though full
Of freight, thrust forward its sharp eager nose,
And give a wrestling leap-up as it goes.
Meanwhile, under its side, two upside-down
And watery-looking things wagg'd each a crown,
As the men's wagg'd above ; and elbows four,
In liquid white shirt-sleeves, tugg'd each its liquid oar.

Other reflections, too, were there, related
To other counterparts, wherewith was freighted
That boat ; a pleasant aristocracy,
That sat, and nothing did but laugh out free,
Add burden to the vessel, jest, and make
A pleasure of what gave the bones to ache
Of those two workers :—these were, Mary's mother
For one ; and sweet aunt Emmeline another ;
And little Mary of the soft blue eyes
And pale child's face, so merry, yet so wise ;
Old Mr. Fenton, too, the vessel bore,
Man of dull sight, but deep canary-lore ;
And wonderful Charles Sunderland, who held
The tiller, and his peace. Thus on impell'd
By uncle Edward's usage of the Trent,
Vig'rous, and Mary's father's, up they went ;
Till out of sight the pleasant vision drove,
And left me once again in Clifton Grove.

V.

THE WALK RESUMED.

THEN from my lowly seat recess'd rose I,
And slowly went, still westward, and still by
A path uxorious of its river-bride ;—
Sometimes must I an ill-bred branch aside
Shoulder, which had no manners, and so tried
Rudely to stop me ; or else be off-striking,
From body clad but little to my liking,
A nettle's head ; or halting to inspect
Some wondrous wing'd thing, whose presence deck'd
A leafy tablet ; or else, inward sinking
The sense, indulge a pleasant vein of thinking
Concerning absent friends, with many a yearning
For some such presence here ; or else concerning
Some problem to be solved, be sure, by no deep learning.
Thence soon recall'd by whirr and frighten'd flap
Of wings close by ; or by the clambering clap
Of sheep's hooves loosening down the crumbling clay ;
Or by the even-timed and vig'rous play
Of coney's hinder feet, as, terrified,
One scamper'd up, its tufty tail to hide

In its red hole ; or by the plunging dash
Of eager vole retreating with a splash
Of sharp excitement ;—and once, by the scene
Of kingfisher at sport. With eye full keen,
He sat upon an overhanging bough,
And spied right under him, by gristly prow
A gudgeon slit the water, which again
Upon her wake closed in. The shining bird
Dropp'd down on her, before his flight was heard,
Digging into the stream with all his weight,
Then rose up in a moment with a freight
Of struggling fins and flashing scales, and took
The booty to his deep and secret nook.
The cliff, still kept undress'd by wind and weather,
Now stares abrupt above us ; put together
By clayey flood and flood ; compact of red
By turns, and greenish white, bed upon bed,
'Mong which some sparsest gleam of gypsum shines.
Beneath this sauntering, come we where inclines
A lane up the art-mitigated side
Of that same cliff ; a lane to southward leading
'Twixt red-sloped banks, and upward so proceeding
Past tree and shrub, past half-curl'd fern and flower ;—
Under the hall ;—beneath the old church tower ;—
By the dark-shrouded lodge ;—then eastward going
'Mong cots, with almost little gardens growing

On their old thatch, so rich in weedy store ;—
Whose gardens, too, beside them, or before,
Make poverty look fair inside each open door.
These partly passing, soon is there discern'd
A stone-stepp'd stile, over the which I turn'd ;
And then of two fields for a little while
Fretted the path ; till, at the final stile,
Once more was I in Clifton Grove ; but now
To deal no longer with its foot, but brow.

VI.

THE LOCAL CLASSICS.

THERE sat I on that entrance-bar, and glean'd
My thrifty limbs some ease-ears, while I lean'd
Forwards to think. No wandering breath of thought
The minutes lately to my mind had brought ;
But now an inner wind came, and wide stirr'd
Thought's branches in me, and once more I heard
The rustlings of fancy's foliage ;
Whereat my mind 'gan fill with life, like cage
Wherein, like birds, glad young thoughts fluttering sung,
Till with the noise that aviary rung
Of strivings sweet, melodious, to think
Of them who 'twixt this neighbourhood a link

Have welded, and the Muses ; to recall
Our local Classics' names, books, fates, and all.
Thus musing, sudden I a footing-sound
Heard in the grass ; and,—my eye turning round
To ask its silent question,—then beheld
A youth, slow pacing, unawares impell'd
By blind thought, and ignoring all the while
Me vaulted on the saddle of the stile,
Till with a knee up-bent, seeking to pass
My three-ribb'd horse, he lifted from the grass
His meditative eyes. And then he made
More haste, as if to escape some ambushade.
Meanwhile I had determined to invade
His privacy, and did so ;—by degrees,
Walking and talking, we were both at ease :
Till the high boughs that shadow'd us began
To be the boughs whose roots deep underran
The very eastern entrance of the grove ;
While, Kirke White so desiring, I unwove
The history of those newer names which made
These trees to shed of more than trees the shade.
Such interest was shown in this rehearsing,
And we so all-absorb'd in our conversing,
As to arrive unwitting in our walk
So near a troop, as let them almost stalk
And poach upon the manor of our talk :—

At whom, intently looking, 'See,' I said,
'These are ev'n they of whom just now we made
Such pleasant mention !'

First to lead the van,
Miller, the basket-maker, was the man :
Him follow'd Spencer Hall ; and, them succeeding,
Came Mary Howitt, with a warm hand leading
Your old friend Mary Leeson tenderly ;
Behind which gentle twain what eye to see
Charles Pemberton could miss, and William Howitt ?
And others too, if this tale might avow it.
These being introduced to, soon began
Our talk to gambol, coney-like, and ran
Its wild feet into merriest of vagaries ;
And not a laugh was heartier than Mary's,—
Who, though the years that to her being went
Tow'rd ripening her brain had influence lent
But nine times, yet was very seldom slow
To comprehend whatever wit might flow.
'Twas little Mary too whose watchful eye
In its blue, eager, happy vagrancy,
Ne'er wearied of observing, first espied
One who came down the grove, dark-hair'd, deep-eyed,
And groundward-looking ; but, I will be bound,
Not seeing aught he look'd at on the ground.
'Who's that, that throws a shade on th' air around,'

Ask'd White, 'as if he bore clinging about him
Some cloud which loved and could not live without him ?'
' Why ! I declare, it is our own good friend,'
Said Mary Howitt, glad ; ' tell him to bend
His steps this way.' Towards us then he came,
And, through my previous mention of the same,
Kirke White heard gladly Philip Bailey's name.
The greeting o'er, ourselves once more we bent
Over the rising greenness, as intent
To reach almost the far head of the grove ;
And still in merry guise the talk would rove,
And the glad minutes danced away full fast
Until we came to the top stile at last.

There ever paused a host of living green
On the cliff's side ; with silent, solemn mien
The warrior-trees seem'd up the height to press
Upon the foe, in southward earnestness,
Shaking their green crests o'er their rugged mail,
Or laying them along the southern gale ;
And halting, as their front ranks were well planted
Where the hill's cope a level footing granted :
While the advanced guard, thrown across the way,
Open'd, between, a green floor to the day.
We, too, stood silent ; for each strove to seek
To hear, feel, see,—do anything but speak

Where Silence seem'd to hush, and stand apart
To listen to the beat of its own heart :
There through the half-leaved boughs came broken gleams
Of sky with glory flooded, streams on streams ;
And we all stood at gaze, nor could control,
Nor would, the exaltation of the soul ;
For heaven's azure calmness did but lean
Serenely o'er what was no less serene ;
And the glad sunshine in the yellow west
Smiled on its counterpart in every breast.

At length, our tongues that spell could bear to break,
Needing relief ; and something some one spake
About a conclave, whereat it was meet
Festus should take the presidential seat.—
' Ay, Festus for our president !' we said
All in one breath ; but Festus shook his head,
And motion'd that Kirke White should take the chair
As being the oldest Clifton Classic there.
' Hear, hear !' we said, with cheers ; and though in spite
Of protestation from the modest White,
Miller and Hall, with many a merry smile,
Bore him and his resistance to the stile,
Where under strong persuasion he relented,
And finally to sit thereon consented.

Against the elm hard by, her mother's knee
Press'd little Mary ; and the green turf we ;
And after brief discourse, it was agreed
Some homespun thing each should recite or read

First, Mary's mother spoke, when by request
Of all she to comply was strongly press'd :—
Perhaps, she said, she might, not being able
To show aught written, tell a simple fable ;
And then, with somewhat of apology
For what she call'd its childishness, which we
Scarcely concurred in—she went on to say
That once upon a time,—though many a day
Had slept beneath the mossy coverlet
Of Time since then,—speedwell, the earth's wee pet,
The little blue-eyed darling of the flowers
(Blue-eyed, like Mary), had pass'd all its hours
In a sweet morning, grieving ; hung its head ;
And almost thought it might as well be dead
As live on so, no benefit supplying
To any living thing ; and saying, sighing,
' The others may be useful, but I can
Do good, neither to insect nor to man.'
Thereby at length there went a maiden pale,
The woful heroine of a woful tale ;

Fierceness was in her heart ; and, in her eyes,
Harsh imprecation of the holy skies :—
Till the subduing sight of that calm flower
Turn'd her untearful pride into a shower
Of wholesome grief, and left her once more free
To pray for strength to bear. ' But still ' (said she)
' The little blue-eyed baby of the flowers,
Germander speedwell, pass'd the morning hours
In weariness and grief, and hung its head,
And almost thought it might as well be dead
As live on so ;—saying, " Alas, I can
Be useful, nor to insect, nor to man ! " '—
—She ceased : but Mary, still the tale pursuing,
Ask'd,—' Did it ever know the good 'twas doing ?
And what became of it ? '—' I cannot tell,'
Was all the answer.—' Ah,' said Hall, ' how well
That little tale deserves to be repeated
To many a weary soul, unkindly treated
By age or illness. And how true, that when
We bloom to God, we thereby bloom to men,
Although we may not dream the good we do ! '

Then Kirke White said to William Howitt, ' You,
Sir, are the next, to give us tale or song ; '—
Who answer'd, he would not detain us long,
Having no tale ; but just give an exact
Statement of what, we might depend, was fact.

It was (and here methought I might espy
A sort of under-twinkle in his eye)
Touching the singular catastrophe
That once befel the cuckoo ; for that he
Formerly had but one long shout, in lieu
Of the two short ones which so well we knew ;
Till fate to take his voice's penny came,
And gave him change in halfpence for the same.
For one day, as it happen'd, Mistress Eve,
Cutting her hair, her scissors chanced to leave
Where, too, the hungry cuckoo chanced to get them,
And, rather fancying he might like them, ate them ;
But the twin blades, his throat in passing through,
Unfortunately snipp'd his shout in two.

Our laughter over, we requested next
Of Pemberton, some song, or storied text,
Until he said, a fable in plain dress
He would attempt ; yet 'twas for Mary's sake ;
Not from the thought that we should interest take
In such a trifle ;—then went on to say
That oft, at what we thought was night,—though they
Know nothing there but one long, happy day,—
There was a feast, for holy gladness given
At souls redeem'd, among the sons of heaven ;
And that at all those festivals divine
The angels drank the smiles of GOD for wine ;

And that the stars were crystal cups, whereby
Their awful contents shone adown the sky ;
And that the moon was the great chalice there
Wherefrom each lesser one received its share.
He said, too, that the angels oft conceived
Something that would be grief, if angels grieved ;
A *dry* tear, shed because man, wayward child
Of sin, from those glad banquets was exiled ;
And that the broad sheet-lightning, which at nights
Streams down upon us, and our souls affrights,
Was but a goblet of that awful wine
Pour'd out by one of those kind ones divine,
Thinking a happy favour to bestow,
Unknown to th' others, upon men below :—
And that it was our sin turn'd what was sent
To make us glad, to terror's instrument ;
So terrible, so full of painful fear
To sinful eyes do all things pure appear :
Wherefore, he argued, evermore we should
Strive to become more wise, and pure, and good,
That so in all such favours we might see
The blessings they were really meant to be.

During the telling of this simple tale
I had been watching little Mary's pale
Most earnest face : open'd were her soft eyes
On Pemberton, wide with their blue surprise ;

And when the story had just breathed its last,
A sideway glance on the far sky she cast,
As if ev'n then some angel might be shedding
Some such remembrance kind :—then, overspreading
Her face with streamy smiles, to soul deep-wed,
' O yes, we will be good ! ' the young enthusiast said.
Whereat a happy smile flow'd o'er each face ;
And 'twixt the kiss and the half-hid embrace
Which Mary's mother gave her, I could note
Of thanks a garland through the air to float
To Pemberton, for his high brow's possessing,
Wov'n of the flowers of a mother's blessing.

Meanwhile a paper had been dropp'd beside
The stile by Kirke White unawares,—espied
By us, who saw th' inscription on its face
Was that of the old legend of the place.
Eager, we seized it, and when White had shown
No wish to read it, it not being his own,
Into this service Pemberton impress'd,
Agreed to give it us at our request ;
And his good-nature straightway, as a bow,
To this result, with powerful to-and-fro,
To the bass-viol of his voice did go :—

VII.

THE FAIR MAID OF CLIFTON.

LONG, long ago,—let us not know how long,—
Are not all love-tales ever old and young?—
Long, long ago, two young folk's faces flamed
In flushes, when each other's name was named ;
Two young lives were in music-step advancing,
Each cymbal-playing to the other's dancing ;
Two young hearts beat in sympathetic beating ;
Two hands oft parted that would still be meeting,
And meeting still for ever, and aye parted
As if hand-sunder'd meant being broken-hearted ;
As it hath been, too, since the first day passed ;
And as it will be, even unto the last.

Touch'd largely by the sun, the river roll'd ;
The Midas-sun turn'd all he touch'd to gold.
Abroad were all the little winds, and free
Leapt they and flitted blithe from tree to tree,
Laving their streamy bodies in those lakes
Of rippled leaves, whence soon each wind-elf breaks
With strugglings, from the clutches of the boughs,
Then shakes herself, and from her sides allows

Some single leaves to fall,—drops of the green
Leaf-element she has been bathing in.
Manifold voices, too, in various sport,
The would-be silence must obstruct and thwart ;
Perhaps the thrush, whose joy is getting free
In bounteous breaks of bubbling melody ;
Or the glad lark, who will praise God, then rise
To carry his own praise up to the skies,—
Praise full of thanks melodious and strong,
Thanks, which their lives exultingly prolong
In shakes, and trills, and spirts, and dancing drops of
song.

All these are only representative
Of what in Bateman's inner world doth live ;
No voiceful joy there, but its counterpart
Finds in the singing of young Bateman's heart ;
No little wind so gladly skips, but it
To Bateman's thoughts shall be a symbol fit ;
And how can Trent in such a glory roll
As to excel the glory in his soul ?

For love is with him. The grass feels his feet
Earnest with love. In love strive and compete
His manly curls, to twine around the breeze.
'Tis love that majesties those common trees

To an exalted grandeur ; gives a dye
Of alien blue divine unto the sky ;
Makes of winds, rushing odours ; reveals flowers
As live joys, leaf-disguised ; finds bridal bowers
In vaguest clouds ; shows, all things all things kiss ;
And makes the flowing Trent a flowing bliss :—
In love his pulses musically move ;
Live joys within him clap their hands, for love.
Look how, as 'twere a spirit, o'er the meads
He walks, but wists not of it ; and proceeds,
Nor thinks how feet have dealings with his pace :
Joy smiles, a shining cherub, from his face,
And sings, for the eye's hearing ! Sure, not air
It is he breathes ;—no, it must be the rare
Life-element for which we mortals pine ;—
This Bateman hath been favour'd with the wine
The angels press from heaven-grapes !—Ah, who 'd be
Other than Bateman, if they might be he ?

Now is he by the boat,—the church,—the green,—
The shady broad embankment ; now doth lean
His steps to pass the little wooden bridge ;
Now uses he the lover's privilege
To spy his love farther than others can.
Lo ! in him breathes all the immortal man,
And in his lordly joy he can behold
The fields, the trees, the stream, the clouds of gold,—

All that great Nature hath, around, above,
To pity them, because they may not love
His Margaret, nor kiss her queenly hand ;—
Can look around him proudly, with a grand
Vouchsafing majesty,—to patronise,
In love's self-glorying, almost the skies ;—
Can wonder other men should be so blind
As not love Margaret ; and is inclined
All feeling to condemn as naught compared
With that which he and Margaret have shared ;—
Thinks the wind breathes of Margaret, *therefore* brings
Such a sweet freshness in its welcomings :—
Hardly conceives the landscape used to know
The way in proper loveliness to glow,—
Or flow'rs to bloom well,—till they did espy
In her the occasion to be handsome by :—
Finds in his heart fresh praisings of her grace,
And blessings of her bright refreshful face :—
Loves the dear grass she treads on, with a gush
Of gratitude, that it hath served to hush,
Smoothen, and ease the motion of her feet :—
While in his heart joy crowds two beats in every beat !
Madness indeed ! Yet ask again,—Who'd be
Unlike the lover, if they might be he ?
Who, sane, would still be so, and not be glad
To be as finely and as nobly mad ?

Nay, let us be no spies upon their meeting,
But softly step aside. The lovers' greeting
Befits not alien eyes. There were but birds
And beasts to hear young Adam's glowing words,
And Eve's, in happy Eden. So let these
Have their own Eden perfect. Let them seize
Kind comfort, hand from hand, even as they meet
Where, near the trees, the gate doth plant its feet
At foot of the smooth rising, Let them walk
Up through the Grove unwatch'd, and in their talk
Foredream a gorgeous future. Let them say
Their bliss o'er to each other,—while they may !

At length, their voices strengthening, we indeed
Cannot but hear their words. They do not heed.
He sees not, nothing knows, nor dreams, unless
Of Margaret, and how her hand to press
Kindly enough, and how contrive to gaze
Longest in her sweet eyes, and make dull air
Into such living words as should be there :—
' I have been all the night long wandering
In dreams, o'er dreary ways, which would not bring
My aching heart to where it wish'd to go.'—
' Ay, so you say,' she says ; ' but do I know ?
Sometimes I 'm half disposed your love to doubt.'
' *Why, Margaret dear !* '—' Nay, nay, I 'll have it out,'

The pretty Wilful said, and, all the while,
Began to steal a little truant smile
From school, about her mouth, and dare to sport
In its new liberty, her face athwart ;
And now her voice is toned more tenderly :—
' Let me complete my speech. Were I to be
A man, and loved, I 'd get a ring, and take it,
As I take this, between my hands, and break it,
And give one half to her, as now I do
To you, and say, as now I say to you,
*Dear Henry, keep this for my sake,—a token
That, though gold breaks, my love can ne'er be broken.*
—He took the slender moiety ; he raised
His gradual-understanding eyes, and gazed
On her deep blushes, like a thing amazed,
Till his joy shone out liquid in his eyes.
Had he been rapt then into paradise,
And heard the viols and the trumpet-start.
Angelical, I know not that his heart
Could have sent brighter flushes to his face.

They stand together, in that lonely place,
Near to the eastmost cliff, just where a deep
And red ravine is plough'd adown the steep :
Together, taller for their joy, they stand ;
Each throbs a new pulse in the other's hand,

A little delegated heart, there sent
By the great heart, its joy to represent
And beat for it, to own the endeared touch.
They of glad loving-kindness hold as much,—
And do not perish by it,—as e'er held
The human earthen vessel.

But impell'd,
As it might be a wing'd and pointed pain,
At last was, from thought's bow in Margaret's brain,
Shot ;—whereunto responding, ' Why suspect,'
Said Bateman, ' that your father may object ?'
—' He may not ; and yet— Henry, won't you call
On him to-morrow,—and so tell him all ?'
—' To-morrow ?—it is soon ;—yet you are right ;
His leave I 'll have before to-morrow night !'

Hopeful he spake ; and yet this doubting-stone
Turn'd sideways joy's full stream. There stray'd a tone
Of sadness through their talk. She whispers : ' Fate
Has oft avail'd hearts even to separate
That loved, perhaps, almost as much as ours.'
—' Ah ! what if on us, too,' he says, ' their powers
The Furies try ? Would then this pledge of gold
You gave, and that eternal promise, hold ?
Perhaps your constancy might then be seen
To break, as this ring broke !'—With alter'd mien,

As hurt, she turns, the while a solemn thrill
Shakes in her voice ; vowing, she never will
Forsake, or cease to love him ; and she prays
All earnestly, that if her heart strange ways
Should take from Bateman wandering, Heav'n may frown,
And bid its awful servants drag her down
That red ravine, and drown her in those deeps !
—‘ *Margaret ! you frighten me !*’—She stands and weeps.

Woe's me, what interruption's this appears
And brings such new, strong reason for her tears,
And puts such fresh disorder in her mien ?
—*Not Margaret's father ?*—‘ Nay, child, you are seen ;
And you, sir,—who are you ?’—Hard, haughty speech
Hurls he at Bateman. They stare, each on each.
Vain explanation is essay'd. At length,—
His daughter's trembling weakness on his strength
Of arm supporting,—the proud man retires,
And leaves young Bateman choking in his fires.

At first they had flared forth past all control.—
Like gleaming sword from sheath, he from his soul
Had drawn wrath sharp and forceful on his foe ;—
His foe ?—What ! Margaret's father ?—No, ah no !
That must not be. He let the weapon go.

There stood he like a man who inly burns,
But all his flame to smoke and stifling turns.
Then slowly fell to naught the enraged start
And thumping of the hammer of his heart ;
And all the sorrow of the thing came o'er him,
And the drear desolation spread before him
Through the waste, pining years. And if he wept
Let us be glad he did so. Some have kept
From weeping, till the tears within suppress
Have put a ranker sap in growths unblest,
And forced up deadly nightshades of the heart,
Or soak'd and rotted all the better part
To pestilent corruption. 'Tis a sign,
If Bateman weeps, some hidden hope must shine
A sun above him, to draw up his tears
From the deep heart-well. Soon, more bravely bears
The boy his grief. Less absolute, he thinks,
The bitterness of the sad cup he drinks.
Love lies a-bleeding, but the injured flower
May yet its healing find in sun and shower.
Shatter'd, no doubt, much tempested and tost
His love's barque may be, but it is not lost.
He'll go, he says, and toil for Margaret's sake ;
He is but young yet, and can wait, and make
Wealth o'er that sea which soon must be between
Hearts which asunder'd never should have been.

But he must see her first. Therefore he hies
Next day, soon as the sun doth in the skies
Lift up the frontal of his golden head.
Like any houseless ghost poor Bateman sped,—
An anguish at his heart, and stinging goads ;
And so he nears the house of Gerard Rhodes,
Where Margaret is, but where he may not be,—
Alas ! alas !— He lean'd against a tree,
The sunlight round him by the night within
Balancing :—and as if peace he might win
By counting up the past, over he goes
The whole sum from its origin to close :—
How they first met,—first spoke ;—how he essay'd
To think of winning such a peerless maid ;—
All her sweet looks, words, motions, innocent ;—
What made him first think her heart tow'rd him bent ;—
How ominously once with him it went
When, having made a carven H and M
In loving nearness, and there married them
With blessings, and a ring cut in the rind
Of a smooth tree,—thenceforth he ne'er could find
Those young initials, though he sought and sought
With careful diligence. Thus back is brought
Each least event, down to the recent blast
That tore love's joyous banner from its mast ;—

Not one heart-breaking detail is he spared ;
But with a dismal bias all the bared
And blighted rows and borders of the whole
Late garden, but now desert of his soul,
He traverses, and mourns his wither'd flowers,
And, weary, lengthens out th' enormous hours.
Over and o'er again the account he sums
Of his great grief :—and yet no Margaret comes.
She frets within close guard. At last, away
He breaks himself from the intent to say
Farewell, as loth as, by a hand forlorn,
The shrieking mandrake hardly might be torn
Up by its roots, in any ancient tale.

That day goes Bateman, eager, pining, pale,
To a sure friend, whom he entreats to bear
A message to poor Margaret ; tells him where ;
Shows him the kernel of the story sad ;
Conjures him, by the friendship which he had,
To help their correspondence to and fro,
And never let her cruel father know :—
All which is promised. A most speedy breeze
Bears Bateman far off o'er the sundering seas.

Why should I be at needless grief to tell
The moaning mischief which on Margaret fell,

And brought her death a-knocking at her door?—
Or what a tedious watching 'twas before
Her friends might comfort to each other give,
And, smiling, in low whispers say 'She'll live'?
For thus at last they did. Thenceforth, what bliss,
Of all the sweet sad past, was left, but this,—
Still the old walks to go, and, at each spot,
Say,—'Here he gave me the forget-me-not,—
As if 'twas possible I could forget!'—
Or,—'Here he first dared say "My Margaret!"'
Or,—'This is where he oftenest loved to go;'
And each old joy's grave make new tears to flow?
—Thus, slowly, went the weeping-time forlorn,
Till from their myriad husky cradles torn
Fell the grandchildren of that season's corn.

Ah me!—What is there in the scope and range
Of this wide, wasted world, but change on change?
This Margaret, this ring-breaker, the unwed
But oath-bound bride of Bateman, shall be led
Into the church, and married by a man
In whose veins blood of Bateman never ran!
—Why should you start? this is no such strange thing
To need a special note of wondering.
—Why should you start? I tell you, deeds are done,
Ay, every hour, beneath this smiling sun,

Which neither tears, nor tearing of the hair,
Nor howling,—no, nor even sheer despair
Gnawing its own flesh,—can enough declare.
It is no new thing, love's flow'r should be found
Prone to be withering in a shallow ground;
What wonder, then, if Margaret should drink
Lethe from time's cup, and forget to think
Of him who ne'er forgot to think of her?
Ay, though she may have watch'd, and would not stir
For hours from the window, when she thought
A letter from poor Henry might be brought;
Then, when she saw it, snatch it, just as food
Would be snatch'd up by famine;—brood, and brood
O'er it, and every lonely moment seize
From each part its remotest sense to tease;
Seem almost to have read it when it came,
Through her long hope and yearning for the same;
Appoint it sanctuaries wherein to rest,—
Nightly, her pillow; or, by day, a nest
Near the heart beating in her breathing breast;
Still over to herself be whispering
Each phrase as a delicious thought and thing;
Wish each line double, and find every one
A thing to smile, tremble, or weep upon;
Know every crease and fold in every part,
And almost have each least stroke off by heart:

All this may be, and yet be overpast,
And Bateman's letters go unread at last.
Her sire neglected no device to catch
Her slow consent to the eligible match ;
And, if her secret thought were known, 'twas part
Of the self-lauded motion of her heart
To deem it bounden duty to obey,
And let her heartless father have his way,
Though her best welfare he had thrust aside
Only to bloat his mean and vulgar pride,
And though it ne'er seem'd duty, till her mind
Its dial-hand from Bateman had declined,
And till she thought, perchance if she refuse
Germaine, she may the ease and pleasure lose
And pride of reigning as a household queen,
Above the level of those who had been
Her maiden equals.—Therefore doth she falter
A perjured ' Yes ' to Germaine at the altar.

Who'd now be Bateman?—Ah, who would not be
Other than Bateman, if they now were he?
Her letters ceasing, the boy can control
His heart no more. He comes home,—learns the whole.
Then sits he down, and leans upon his hand
A head confused, and strives to understand

The whole tale ; and thus reads its meaning o'er :—
It is, to stand by Margaret no more ;
Nor feel the warm'd pressure and the pride
Of her confiding arm against his side ;
Nor learn her looks by heart ; nor watch arise
The pleasure of his presence in her eyes ;
Never to sit with her in secret bower,
Or comfort her in any weeping hour ;
Never to lean o'er her closed eyes, and make
A gentlest stirring lest from sleep she wake ;
Never to be her champion in the strife,
To affray her griefs and smooth her path of life ;
Never to serve, her faithful minister,
Or have a right even to be kind to her :—
All such hopes now for him are dead and gone,
Buried, and cover'd up, and stamp'd upon,
And have no rising. All that was amass'd
For his possession in the splendid past
Unto—a broken ring hath shrunk at last !

There be great spirits can consent and smile
At Fortune's grossest felonies, even while
Their treasures 'tis she steals,—with tearless eyes
Gaze in the face of the bereaving skies,—
And answer to misfortune's keenest smart
With the big beat of a majestic heart.

Alas ! Not such was Bateman. The half-ring
By letter, and by chance the news, they bring
Of a young corpse whereon these lines are read :—
FALSE WOMAN, OF THY VOWS AND OATHS HAVE
DREAD,
FOR THOU ART MINE BY THEM, ALIVE OR DEAD !

There faded Margaret from that fatal hour,
As from its sick roots a worm-haunted flower,
For she began to be all overrun
With creeping thoughts of what her fault had done.
Sit could not she, nor stand, nor rest for long
In any place ; but memory of her wrong
Wrought as an evil fret upon her brain,
And gave her in fresh postures unto pain.
Ah, sure, had Bateman thought what might betide
Her by his dying, thus he had not died !
Poor girl, poor girl ! She eats not, does not sleep,
And frets and burns with fever ; cannot sleep,
But makes, with restlessness, in many a heap
Disorder rise and sit about her bed :
And ever to one same plaint is she wed,
Moaning,—‘ *Alive or dead ! alive or dead !* ’

Two kind-soul'd neighbours near her bed forlorn
A-watching sit ; for a child hath been born ;

And see, the mother sleeps !—‘ Oh, do not stir,
Now such a wholesome thing hath fallen on her ! ’—
So they sit quiet, till their drowsy eyes
Notice no more the shadows fall and rise
And dance round the night-taper. Morning breaks,
And leaps in at the window, off the flakes
Of its sun-lighted clouds.—One wakes, and wakes
Her co-nurse. Chilly is the morning air.
They look into the bed ; they feel ; they stare !
Still warm her place, yet Margaret is not there !
Calm, calm in Clifton deeps the Trent doth flow,
But down that red ravine, an hour ago,
Did Margaret run therein and sink below.
The nearest villagers awoke, ’tis said,
At hearing, as they shook upon their bed,
A piteous wailing of ‘ *Alive or dead !* ’—
Nor do they a false verdict give, who tell
That Margaret was borne off by fiends of hell ;—
Remorse and madness serve the infernal crown,
And these the demons were that dragged her down.

VIII.

CONCLUSION.

THE deep voice ceased. I lifted up my head.
Had I been sleeping? Was the vision fled?
The sharp and sudden silence seem'd to make
The Loneliness upon her couch to wake,
And half rise on her arm, and cold, serene,
Majestic, distant, like a conscious queen,
Silently, calmly, gaze me in the face.
Evening with dew's had overspread the place
Almost as gently as the sweet wild rose
Her pilgrimage from bud to flower goes.
The distant town across the river grey
Was strengthening its glimmering display
Of invitation, adding ray to ray.
Homeward, in silent thought, I went my way.



ROSE'S DIARY.

TO H. S. S.

*O Friend, O Brother, O Beloved !
I fold thy grief around my heart,
By love's most prizèd privilege
In all thy pain to bear a part.*

*Rest thee, thou Traveller opprest !
My fanning sighs shall o'er thee move ;
My heart, thy rock of shady rest,
Pours thee its stream of tearful love.*

*O Friend ! O Love ! That murmuring song
Hath but faint echoes of her past ;
The sweet full anthem, swelling long,
Leaving this silent void at last.*

*A 'silent void' ? Ah no ! Ah no !
Clasp fast thy pain, beloved friend !
Its pangs from holiest memories grow
Which thou shalt cherish to the end.*

*Our Rose, our gather'd flower ! We weep
Slow-falling, pining, fruitless tears,
Thinking how fair she bloom'd. We keep
Her fragrance to embalm our years.*

*Our own ' Gione ' ! O to lift
Up to her height our earnest eyes,
To walk with her in living faith,
In simple truth, sublimely wise !*

*Strong, ev'n as she, to bear our woe ;
Pure, ev'n as she, from taint of ill ;
So might we feel, and, feeling, know
That all her love is with us still.*

1850.

S. P.

S. N. R. F.

JUNE 20, 1850.

This 'Diary,' named in loving remembrance of a Friend of my youth, was meant to stand as though over her grave like her pure statue in white marble. But being hewn from the quarry of experience not by her hands, but by mine, many dark veins impair the whiteness of the material, and sadly misrepresent her. Mr. Patmore sings of

*' — souls found here and there,
Oases in our waste of sin,
Where everything is good and fair,
And Heaven remits its discipline.'*

In these, the sweet innocence of childhood, undefaced in their maturer life, spreads a continuous evenness of excellence over it all. It always appeared to me that of such was this dear Lady, who, like her of whom Thomas Fuller tells, showed in her religious life 'a strange evenness and untroubled passage, sliding towards her ocean of God and of Infinity with a certain and silent motion.'

‘ Again therefore spake Jesus unto them, saying, I am the light of the world : he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.’

ROSE'S DIARY.

I.

JANUARY.

I HAVE a little trembling light, which still
All tenderly I keep, and ever will.

I think it never wholly dies away,
But oft it seems as if it could not stay,
And I do strive to keep it if I may.

Sometimes the wind-gusts push it sore aside ;
Then closely to my breast my light I hide,
And for it make a tent of my two hands ;
And, though it scarce might on the lamp abide,
It soon recovers, and uprightly stands.

Sometimes it seems there is no flame at all ;
I look quite close because it is so small :
Then all for sorrow do I weep and sigh ;
But Some One seems to listen when I cry,
And the light burns up, and I know not why.

Sometimes I think—How could I live, what do,
Without my light?—And then,—Does each of you,
Dear friends,—(I think)—a little light have too?
But still I fear to speak, and can but sigh,—
And it may stay my secret till I die.

II.

FEBRUARY.

To her, my friend, about this secret light
I spake to-day : she said she knew the same ;
I must be thankful, for it was GOD's flame ;
For guidance it was meant, and for delight,
And, unto all who asked for it, it came.

She said it is this light that shows the way
To true deeds ; that the martyr who adjourns
From flames to heavenly house, finds it outburns
The pile ; and that, it lighting us, we may
Rejoin our long-lost loving ones some day.

As these her words found entrance at mine ears,
Mine eyes grew hot ; great thoughts my mind did
drown ;

I seem'd to breathe of heavenly atmospheres ;—
But when she went away I knelt me down,
And all my face was wetted o'er with tears.

III.

MARCH.

How shall I keep this sacred light ? How best
Preserve it from such influence as assails ?
Unless I tend it lovingly, it fails ;
And there is nothing when the blast prevails
But the poor shelter of my hands and breast.

O God, O Father, hear Thy child who cries !
Who would not quench Thy flame, who would not dare
To let it dwindle in a sinful air ;
Who does feel how all-precious such a prize,
And yet, alas ! is feeble and not wise.

O hear, dear Father, for Thou know'st the need !
Thou know'st what awful height there is in Thee,—
How very low I am. O do Thou feed
Thy light, that it burn ever, and succeed
My life to truest holiness to lead.

IV.

APRIL.

GLADLY unto the House of God I go.
The private sabbath-fountain, ebbing low,
Up-welling will with more refreshment flow ;
New health of heart, new wealth of thought arise,
In worship of the Lord of earth and skies.

Here on each reverent face how good to gaze !
How loud the silence from their lips that falls !
And hark, the place how hush'd, when o'er the walls
A solemn, sacred, soften'd echo strays,
Born of the voice wherewith the pastor prays !

The prayer wherewith our souls at first did bow
In stillness, soon we may with voice endow,
For lo ! the choir hath now begun to bare,
Reverent, the limbs of Music, who, till now
Hath lain retir'd in the silent air ;

And now they show that fair form whereunto
We with our voice the tender air may mould
And fashion till it take resemblance true.
O Father ! let us now, so singing, strive
To be with worship's very soul alive.

Let all our hearts with Thy inspirings glow,
And make pure thoughts, like flowers, bud and blow
Before Thee, O our Saviour ! till there go
Such sweetness forth as shall in life's rough ways
Linger and live about us all our days.

V.

MAY

AN awe-inspiring thing it is to invite
The church profess'd of God, that they may see
How well we do maintain the heavenly light,
How pure, how holy-temper'd we can be,
How daily win similitude to Thee.

And yet this thing thou callest me to do ;
And I, a child, am to confess Thy name
Among those who confess Thee, and proclaim
That I am also Thine ; possessing too,
As they, the shinings of Thy holy flame.

Therefore, O Father ! faith to do the task
Thou call'st me to ; pureness, to show me how
Thy Spirit sincerely ever to avow ;
And true humility, and love, to endow
My life with henceforth alway,—these I ask.

And while 'tis just that to profess before
Thy servants' faces I should be afraid,
O let me, Father ! ever dread much more
Lest I from that profession retrograde
Which to Thyself in secret I have made.

VI.

JUNE.

THE day with light its genial self engirds ;
The trees are glad with fluty voices dear :—
'Thou art my God !'—When I say o'er those words,
I see a light beyond the day, and hear
Voices far richer than the songs of birds.

Mine eyes with happy tears then overswim ;
The thoughts I have are sweetest that can be ;
My mind 's a cup with love above the brim ;
Fine incense circles round whate'er I see ;
In every sound I hear a holy hymn.

Thou art my God ! Thou, Father, Thou my Friend ;
My Saviour Thou, the eternal Lord of all !
O thought which doth all other thought transcend,
Beneath whose stress well may I prostrate fall
In love and wonder which should know no end !

VII.

AUGUST.

UNLESS I strive these people dear to bless,
I do not love my God. If still I seek
No good or joy of theirs, and acquiesce
In what makes weak the strong, or wrongs the weak,
Myself of God's own love I dispossess.

I must begin to live for others now ;
Some wisely-loving work must now commence.
Soon will this sun go down ; alas, and how
Should I then dare with any confidence
A second dawn to look for and avow ?

Who works not for his fellows starves his soul ;
His thoughts grow poor and dwindle, and his heart
Grudges each beat as misers do a dole ;
He dies anon, and shall with them have part
Who find in death an everlasting goal.

VIII.

SEPTEMBER.

PUT not on me, O Lord ! this work divine,
For I am too unworthy, and Thy speech
Would be defrauded through such lips as mine.
I have not learn'd Thee yet, and shall I teach ?
O choose some other instrument of Thine !

The great, the royal ones, the noble saints,
These all are Thine, and they will speak for Thee.
No one who undertakes Thy words but faints ;
Yet, if that man is saintly and sin-free,
Through him Thou wilt, O Lord ! self-utter'd be.

But how shall I say anything, a child,
Not fit for such high work,—oh how shall I
Say what in speaking must not be defiled ?
And yet, and yet, if I refuse to try,
The light that burns for mine own life will die.

IX.

OCTOBER.

How noble ought my manners now to be,
How white my secret life,—I, who have seen
The Lord in His Word's glory ! I, who see
So vast a mound of love to intervene
Between the torrent of my sins and me !

I ought to walk now as the angels do,
The holy dead, redeem'd by faithful strife
From this inferior state ; to whom accrue
The higher issues of that blessed life
That hath with Thee undying interview.

I ought to be as holy-white as they,
As ardent toward my Lord :—alas ! instead,
Upon the very path my Lord doth tread
To meet my soul, I sink down, sooth to say,
On the road-side almost a castaway.

Up, up, my soul ! Awake, and use thy goad !
I lose for ever the divine abode
If in this poor estate I thus abide :
The ground I stand on now will soon subside,
And be by ocean fathomless o'erflow'd.

X.

NOVEMBER.

WHAT mean these slow returns of love ; these days
Of wither'd prayer ; of dead unflowering praise ?
These hands of twilight laid on me to keep
Dusk veils on holy vision ? This most deep,
Most eyelid-heavy, lamentable sleep ?

Lo, time is precious as it was before ;
As sinful, sin ; my goal as unattain'd ;
And yet I drowse, and dream, and am not pain'd
At God far off as ever heretofore,—
At sin as flagrant as of old, or more.

Dear Lord, what can I do ? I come to Thee :
I have none other helper. Thou art free
To save me, or to kill. But I appeal
To Thine own love which will not otherwise deal
Than prove Thyself my help, Thy will my weal.

Wake, wake me, God of love ! and let Thy fire
Loosen these icicles and make them drop
And run into warm tears ; for I aspire
To hold Thee faster, dearer, warmer, nigher,
And love and serve Thee henceforth without stop.

XI.

DECEMBER.

O FATHER ! I have sinn'd against Thee,—done
The thing I thought I never more should do.
My days were set before me, light all through,
But I have made them dark, it is too true,
And drawn dense clouds between me and my Sun.

Forgive me not, for grievous is my sin ;
Yea, very deep and dark. Alas ! I see
Such blackness in it, that I may not be
Forgiven of myself,—how then of Thee ?—
Vile, vile without ; black, utter black within.

If my shut eyes should dare their lids to part,
I know how they must quail beneath the blaze
Of Thy love's greatness. No : I dare not raise
One prayer to look aloft, lest I should gaze
On such forgiveness as would break my heart.

XII.

JANUARY.

I SAID, 'These trivial rules I cannot see
Why any longer they should cumber me.'
So left I them behind, and for awhile
The change was pleasant and did me beguile
To dance, to sing of liberty, and smile.

But presently my light went dim, my head
Grew dull and heavy, and my heart was lead;
And, if I moved at all, it was to go
Back to the thickets and the places low
Which thorns and cross-leaved nettles over-grow.

At last I reassumed my rules with pain,
(I thank Thee, Lord !) and soon grew well again.
But ever, if I leave those helps behind,
My heart beats colder, and my head, I find,
Grows dull and heavy, and mine eyes are blind.

Sometimes I think, 'What can a thing so small
Matter to eye or head or heart at all?'

But then I answer, 'What is that to me?'

And truly, Father ! it is good there be
Reasons in reasons only known to Thee.

XIII.

MARCH.

TAKE what ye will, ye men who boldly nod,
And blindly, opposite the Lord of all ;
Take from me what ye will, the loss is small,
With still a Father upon Whom to call.
Take what ye will but Him. Leave me my God.

And they *must* leave Thee, Father ! None can kill
Thy living splendours. Let them think to shake
The sky as 'twere a sheet, until they make
The sun to fall thereof, they cannot take
My Sun away from me, do what they will.

They cannot rob me of my God. I hold
My Friend with such a hand as will not sprain
Though myriads counter-strive with might and main.
O daring men, Him ye ignore in vain :
Whom ye deny, mine arms of love enfold.

XIV.

JULY.

THE Pearl,¹ my Lord's gate-jewel bright and fair,
My charm against deceit, against despair !
It makes me glad as often as I gaze,
Gives me true counsel in the entrance-ways,
And sheds bright light and comfort on my days.—

Had I but lost this vision, even although
My life might still to some appear as sound
And vivid as before, alas ! I know
By them who truly see I should be found
Lying that instant dead upon the ground.

Sometimes I gaze upon it, and it makes
Me shake with its rebuke. Less awful breaks
The streaming glory of the morning-red.
In sultry skies the glowings are less dread
Of lightnings waiting in their gathering lakes.

¹ Rev. xxi. 27.

XV.

SEPTEMBER.

MY mind was ruffled with small cares to-day,
And I said hasty words, and did not keep
Long-suffering patience well ; and now how deep
My sorrow for this sin ! In vain I weep
For foolish words I never can unsay.

Yet not in vain, oh surely not in vain !
This trouble must compel me to take heed ;
And surely I shall learn how much I need
Thy constant strength mine own to help indeed,
And all my thought to patience to constrain.

Yes, I shall learn at length, though I neglect
Day after day to use my help from Thee.
O aid me that I alway recollect
Thy gentle-heartedness ; and O correct
Whatever else of sin Thou seest in me !

XVI.

NOVEMBER.

EACH day a page is of my being's book,
And what I do is what I write therein ;
And often do I make sad blots of sin ;
And seldom proves the writing quite akin
To what my heart beforehand undertook.

Daily I turn a fresh leaf, and renew
My hope of now at last a nobler page ;
But presently in something I engage
That looks but poorly on a calm review,
And leaves my future a mean heritage.

So leaf on leaf, once clean, is turn'd and gone,
And the dark spots show through, and I grow sad,
And blush, and frown, and sigh. And, if I had
A million pages yet to write upon,
Perhaps the millionth would be just as bad.

What shall I do? Some new leaves, even yet,
May be before me. And perhaps I may
Write, even yet, some not ignoble day.
Alas ! I do not know ;—I cannot say.—
What is it to feel living?—I forget.

XVII.

JANUARY.

CUT off from Thee I am. Sin is the knife.
Yet must I join Thee, though with grief and strife.
Oh let me live with Thee,—live, live with Thee !
How else, Lord ! can I live, unless more free
Thy truth, Thy love, Thy life, flow on through me ?

Cries with this prayer my heart's tongue without rest,
God's great name being on it. This hath drest
Mine eyes full oft in veils that swell and drip ;
This oft hath weigh'd a burden on my lip,
And lifted for my Lord my sighing breast.

Oh let me live with Thee,—live, live with Thee !
How else, Lord ! can I live, unless more free
Thy truth, Thy love, Thy life, flow on through me ?
I am cut off from Thee. Sin is the knife.
Yet will I join Thee, though through grief and strife.

XVIII.

FEBRUARY.

LATE on me, weeping, did this whisper fall :—

‘ Dear child, there is no need to weep at all.

Why go about to grieve and to despair ?

Why weep now through thy future’s eyes, and bear

Vainly to-day to-morrow’s load of care ?

‘ Mine is thy welfare. Ev’n the storms fulfil,

On those who love Me, none but My decrees.

Lightning shall not strike thee against My will ;

And I, thy Lord, can save thee when I please

From quaking earth and the devouring seas.

‘ Why be so dull, so slow to understand ?

The more thou trustest Me, the more can flow

My love, and thou, a jewel in My hand,

Shalt richer be ; whence thou canst never go

So softly slipping, but that I shall know.

'If thou should'st seem to slip,—if griefs and pains
And death assail,—for thee there yet remains
My love, which lets them, and which surely will
Thee reinstate where thou a place shalt fill
Inviolate, for ever steadfast still.'

'Father !' (I said) 'I do accept Thy word.
To perfect trust in Thee now am I stirr'd
By the dear gracious saying I have heard.'
And, having said this, fell a peace so deep
Into my heart, what could I do but weep?

XIX.

MARCH.

I MUST behold Him nearer than I do ;
Far truer vision of my Lord achieve ;
So live, as never more His heart to grieve ;
So open lie as largely to receive
The Lord at every lustrous avenue,

And reach Him much more closely than I do :
Must on His Word more deeply reverent gaze ;
More fully breathe His life, which trembleth through
My being when before me He displays
His love engirt by that rebuking blaze

That awes the more at every interview,
Yet leaves a blessing holy and most sweet
But now my desolate life is incomplete.
I must in God mine old delight renew ;
I must behold Him nearer than I do.

XX.

APRIL.

My mind is towards the dwellings of my Lord,
Whereto the faithful joyfully repair
To offer in devout, divine accord
Their gifts to Him Who gave them,—the All-fair;
Their prayers to the Prayer-hearer Who is there.

They join their voices in what beauteous strains !
In them, Himself revealing, the Most High,
How strong, how sweet intensity attains !
How large above them, there, His vivid eye !
How deep, how dear, the comfort that He deigns !

There, inward music glorifies the hour ;
There, in glad cheer they sit, and, sitting, sing,
And, singing, inly rise, and, rising, tower
Above the summit of each selfish thing,
Into the Saviour's Wisdom, Love, and Power.

Love, Wisdom, Power, supreme, ineffable !
The Way, the Truth, the Life, for ever blest !
Yea, with His saints, so gather'd, it is well,
When His acceptance them doth circumvest,
And they within His awful secret dwell.

XXI.

MAY.

How beautiful it is to be alive !
To wake each morn as if the Maker's grace
Did us afresh from nothingness derive
That we might sing ' How happy is our case !
How beautiful it is to be alive ! '

To read in God's great Book, until we feel
Love for the love that gave it ; then to kneel
Close unto Him Whose truth our souls will thrive,
While every moment's joy doth more reveal
How beautiful it is to be alive.

Rather to go without what might increase
Our worldly standing, than our souls deprive
Of frequent speech with God, or than to cease
To feel, through having wasted health or peace,
How beautiful it is to be alive.

Not to forget, when pain and grief draw nigh,
Into the ocean of time past to dive
For memories of God's mercies, or to try
To bear all sweetly, hoping still to cry
'How beautiful it is to be alive !'

Thus ever towards man's height of nobleness
Strive still some new progression to contrive ;
Till, just as any other friend's, we press
Death's hand ; and, having died, feel none the less
How beautiful it is to be alive.

XXII.

JUNE.

PRAYER is the world-plant's blossom, the bright flower,
A higher purpose of the stem and leaves ;—
Or call it the church-spire, whose top receives
Such lightning calm as comforts, not aggrieves,
And with it brings the fructifying shower.

Prayer is the hand that catcheth hold on peace ;—
Nay, 'tis the very heart of nobleness
Whose pulses are the measure of the stress
Wherewith He doth us, we do Him, possess :
If these should fail, all our true life would cease.

Who live in prayer a friend shall never miss ;
If we should slip, a timely staff and kind
Placed in our grasp by hands unseen shall find ;
Sometimes upon our foreheads a soft kiss,
And arms cast round us gently from behind.

XXIII.

JULY.

How beautiful our lives may be, how bright
In privilege, how fruitful of delight !
For we of love have endless revenue ;
And, if we grieve, 'tis not as infants do
That wake and find no mother in the night.

They put their little hands about, and weep
Because they find mere air, or but the bed
Whereon they lie ; but we may rest, instead,
For ever on His bosom, Who doth keep
Our lives alike safe, when we wake, and sleep.

And lo ! all round us gleam the angelic bands,
Swift messengers of Providence all-wise,
With frowning brows, perhaps, for their disguise,
But with what springs of love within the eyes,
And what strong rescue hidden in the hands !

And our lives may in glory move along,
First, holy-white, and then with goodness fair
For our dear Lord to see ;—the keenest thong
Of all that whips us, welcome ; and the air
Our spirits breathe, self-shaped into a song.

XXIV.

AUGUST.

A LITTLE lowly gate ;—through this we go
Forth into truth divine with love ablaze ;
Therein He leads us on through wondrous ways
Ineffable. Whatever spirit prays,
That low gate entering, is exalted so.

Out in the garden of the Word, that wide
Glad paradise, we are borne on by prayer ;
There do we breathe air high and glorified,
And, He updrawing us, attain the fair
Ascending terraces, and prosper there.

O prosperous above all measure, those
His good and faithful servants, self-abhorred,
Who enter in the joy of their dear Lord,—
Joy that in others' welfare centres, grows
In others' gain, in others' joy o'erflows.

In heaven, to rise, is to augment the store
Of power to enrich the poorest, and defend
The weakest, through the widest, nearest door.
How else could Christ's redeem'd endure to ascend
From height to happier height for evermore?

FUNERAL WREATHS.



FUNERAL WREATHS.

EDWARD BROTHERTON.

WELL may they fall—these tears ; and yet, dear
Friend,

Long mourning years will not suffice to feel
The fulness of our loss, nor to the end
Its bitterness reveal.

For thine was not a mind of vulgar mould ;
Thy purpose never needed mask or hood ;
But always for the Right thy heart was bold,
And steadfast for the Good.

God gave to thee looks kind and dignified,
Gave wisdom's loving eyes and generous brow.
Not oft I've known, than thine, a heart more wide,—
A nobler man, than thou.

What courteous charities adorn'd thy hand !
Christ was thy Master, and thou didst rejoice
To woo men to His Wedding ; didst command
With a most kindly voice.

Even wilful error could not hate the sound,
Though writhing at the truth, of thy appealing,—
Truth clad in words of earnestness profound,
And full of solemn feeling ;—

Because so tender in its sternest mood,
Thy manner was ; so apt in loving meetness ;
So gracious in its mastery ; so good
And wholesome in its sweetness.

We, who had known thee long, and recognised
That only thy great meekness thee detain'd
From general honour,—thee whom we so prized
With reverence unfeign'd ;—

How glad were we when thou the bonds didst break
Of diffidence, thy privacy off cast,
And as a leader of the people take
Thy rightful place at last !

Now, high and blissful is thy heaven, we know ;

But thy true heart, was it not always set
On service, not on pleasure ? And earth's woe
Sorely requires thee yet.

Why might not Heaven still spare thee to our need ?

For thee, with this sad earth can heaven compare ?
There are no orphans' hearts that blindly bleed,
No ragged children there.

Alas, poor starving minds that want in vain !

Now thou art gone, who will regard their need ?
So feel ? So strive ? So toil with might and main ?
With such persistence plead ?

Yet 'tis no mystery why thou didst die :

Surely from earth thou hadst not been set free
But that for some still larger work on high
The Lord had need of thee ;

'Tis for some ministry of loving skill,

Some heaven-augmenting function wide and deep,
Fit just for thee as for none else to fill,
That we are left to weep.

J. B.

THE church sometimes gives heaven men
Of whom with cause heaven might complain
That, though it gets accession then,
'Tis more a getting than a gain.

But now a boon the church imparts ;
Heaven with new riches we endow ;
One after their own loving hearts
To the good angels give we now.

Not without grief we let him pass ;
We are not yet, as angels, good ;
To heaven we give what we, alas !
Would have kept from it if we could.

For he we mourn was one of those
Whose presence of itself affords
Heart-music that in silence flows,
And comforts more than many words.

His goodness we all have by heart :—

I've known him by a mourner stand
And most unsought-for help impart
By the mere pressure of a hand,—

A hand that, round the mourner's put

In silence, yet as much hath done
As though 'twere not one only, but
The hand of every friend in one.

His trustful heart laid loving stress

On God's love, howsoever tried,
And even in most sore distress
Was sure the Lord would still provide ;

And always his life's fact made clear

What his life's theory express'd,
That in the end it will appear
That all is ever for the best.

He had his griefs, like other men ;

But to God's will could softly bow,
And, smiling, say, ' Heaven is not then
And there, but heaven is here and now.

A happy man whose heart would feel
And head would think for those around ;
Ready to find out ills to heal,
As well as heal the ills he found.

Still towards our Father he ascends ;
Still towards our God aspires his way,
Where she, his dearest, and their friends
Angelic, throng the gates of day.

To these how thankless and how wrong
Our sorrow for his loss appears !
'Nay, sing,' they cry, 'a grateful song
That ye have had him all these years.

'Now more than ever yours indeed,
From him more grandly than before
Shall heavenly influences proceed,
To be your blessing evermore.'

October, 1876.

B. M. B.

WHAT, gone ? Our fair young neighbour ?
It cannot, cannot be true !—

But how will the mother bear it ?

And what will the father do ?

Alas, for the hearts sore wounded,

For the lives so much undone !

Alas for their home, their hearth, their earth,

Alas for their moon and sun !

For the sky will fill again with light,

But not as it fill'd before ;

The hearth-fire crackling may be bright,

But how can it warm them more ?

Weary, old earth will look, and worn,

And home some alien scene

Planted with many a keen heart-thorn

Wherever her hand hath been,—

Planted with thorn by loving hands
That only planted flowers ;
But love-flowers turn to roots of pain
When wash'd by the death-grief's showers.

Yet can it be, Fair Neighbour,—
Gone, with the sweet young face,
The eyes so bright with kindly light,
And the form so gentle with grace ?

The mouth that sang so sweetly
As the music moved along ?
The voice that seem'd in common speech
Almost as pleasant as song ?

Gone to the land so silent,
The home hid deep in the sky,
Whereto our questioning hearts look up,
But never for reply ?

Alas, alas ! Fair Neighbour,
We had not thought to stay
So long on earth to outlive thy birth
Into the heavens gay.

And yet, if we were wiser,
We should deeply thankful be
That the heaven abiding our coming
Is henceforth the richer with thee ;

For when it opens around us,
And we breathe its welcoming air,
It will take us in with a happier smile
For thy sweet presence there.

February, 1879.

H. P.

LOVE, broken-hearted, cried :—
‘Why hath this poet died ?
Why should a harp, just tuned and taught to play,
Be given no concert-day,
But idly broken up and cast away?—
Doth some Child-god complete
Here His poor music-toys,
To please Himself a moment with their noise,
Then swell the piteous pile beneath His feet?’

‘Oh, shame!’ the Angels said;
‘But have you never read
How blessèd, yea
How blessèd they
Who in the Lord are dead?
They from their labours rest,
And their works follow them, in heavenly state,
To new achievements wonderful and great,
Where the best pow’rs their souls possess’d,
Toiling no more, work free, spontaneous, and blest.

' Oh, let your thoughts be lifted on our wings !
What seem'd your own dear harp, whose tender strings
You saw destroy'd ev'n in your sad embrace,

Was but the covering case
Of the true harp and music's real things.
What if our songful companies, to praise
The Ancient One of Days,
Had need now, for their exquisite content,

Of one more instrument ?
Deem you it strange that His permission went
With our keen search around
For even the very best that might be found ?

Far above earthly thoughts and ways,
Your son shall help us, through the eternal days,
To sing of Love the omnipotence and praise.

So be you of good cheer ;

Let no more tears be shed ;

Restrain your sobbings, that your hearts may hear
Him singing, in our choirs, glad, loud and clear,
How great and marvellous His ways Who said,—

" Write, Bless'd are the dead." "

April, 1884.

GLEANINGS.

TO MARY SOPHIA SUTTON.

*If any it pleases to see
Past work of thy poet,
'Tis wholly from thee and to thee
They have and they owe it ;
Hadst thou not its author and it
So tenderly cherish'd,
It would in its burial-pit
Have quietly perish'd.*

*And now that the summer is o'er,
And the autumn is ending,
I through the old garden once more
My way have been wending,
To cull, in the mist and the cold
And the wet and the waning,
Whatever of new or of old
Might still be remaining.*

*Well knowing towards all that is mine
Thy generous leanings,
I boldly denominate thine
These ultimate gleanings ;
And gladly I bring unto thee,
(Strong love's weak expression,)
This handful of flowers to be
Thy special possession.*

*Thou'lt prize them no less though they tell
That winter is coming ;
Yet let them foreshadow as well
Our heavenly homing ;
The winter will nip and will sting
And blacken and harden,
But in the soon-following Spring
We'll have a new garden.*

November, 1885.

All things were made by Him ; and without Him
was not any thing made that hath been made.'

GLEANINGS.

A HYMN OF CREATION.

I.

GOD ! The Alone, the Infinite, the Whole !
Star-dust condenses, suns burn, planets roll
From Thy Word's fountain, O Creator sole !
All that Thou makest, art Thou ; and yet far
More high, deep, wide, than all creations are.

Thou Who of all things the Inventor art,
Whether of spirit-powers we speak, apart
From things material, or of things that be
Subjected to those powers,—the company
Of rolling orbs throughout immensity :—

Thou by Whom, ere our system's flow of things,
Their fatherly first beat Time in his wings
Retain'd ; where, scarcely breathing, he did stand
Still, eager, tremulous, till the first sand
Might drop down in the hour-glass in his hand :—

Thou, at whose Voice Space, like a sleep, was broke,
To carry in her arms when she awoke
Another orb, Thy offspring ; that her breast
And mother-arms might foster and invest
Our sun, one babe the more to be caress'd :—

Thou by whose Word that sun, infill'd with fire
By the eternal sun, mother and sire
Became, and brought at length to blazing birth,
And caused to roll in its own orbit's girth,
Each moonless or moon-lighted planet-earth :—

Thou, Who with bursting fires and various flow
Of winds above, and floods and seas below,
With masses crystalline, and metal-vein,
And ooze, and sediment, and heaps immane,
Layest the bases strong for heart and brain :—

Who dost lift up the continents, and spread
For every sea its deep, its shifting bed
For every stream ; whose operant hand defines
The bearings of all trends and serpentines,
And levels of all risings and inclines :—

Who chillest flowing waves to icy rock,
And rains to snow and hail, and dost unlock
And set all free again with fervent air ;
Who all the mineral creatures dost endow
With man-foreseeing uses :—Lo, we bow !

II.

GOD ! Whose incessant hand still weaves a robe
Of verdure and of glory for the globe ;
Adding cells living to the living cell,
Until to aspects multiform they swell,
With order'd parts, symmetric, parallel ;

Taking possession wide with leafy hands
And branches for their arms ; about the lands
In green profuseness, and in flowers the while
Thy thought inscribing in symbolic style
Gorgeous on every continent and isle :—

Yea, Thine ! And none the less because outwrought
By instruments subservient to Thy thought ;
Quick honey-seeking winged things that fly
From flower to flower, strange pollen to supply,
And make the future all the past outvie ;—

Thine, still, the flowers ; in Thy designs array'd ;
Their insects, too, are Thine ; them hast Thou made,
Thy purposes to struggle toward, and aid ;—
In all are shown the wonders of Thy lore
Creative :—Thee, Great Maker, we adore !

III.

O GOD, Who, working now in subtler moods
Within the cells where coming sentience broods,
Maketh the earth with faunal growths abound
In myriad moving forms of being, found
In homes of air, of water, and of ground ;—

Artist profound of countless lives that look
And feel all round us, for whom every nook
Of Nature hastens to provide new nests,
Fired by Thy liberal heart, which manifests
So grand a yearning for increase of guests ;—

From Whose fount flow all various things that thrive
On feet or wings, or, watery, float and dive ;—
For whose progressive change Thou dost contrive
Needs that them force, by slow but sure degrees,
New strange developments to snatch and seize ;—

Who all their motions movest in, and art
Of their sensations the invisible heart ;—
Who kindest passions swift, hot, cold, or slow,
Mothers of thought and gesture :—Thee to know
We seek, and to adore Thee, bending low !

IV.

GOD ! by Whose lives in nostrils breathed, our race
Is lift above its animal being-base
Unto a noble heritage and place,—
A race of higher power and renown,
All Nature's monarch, all Creation's crown ;—

Thou, Who instillest thought that weighs the spheres
And dives in problem-seas there to enmesh
Whatever subtly-wandering thing appears,
And mak'st the books be written o'er afresh
With vast increases through advancing years ;—

Who with oar, sail, steam, rail, and throbbing wire
Dwindlest the earth to bring the peoples nigher,
That far-off lands may mutual aid arrange,
That east with west may commune and exchange,
And north to south be helpful, and not strange ;—

Beauteous Inspirer of each high attempt
In form, sound, colour, language, to protract
Æsthetic influences death-exempt,
That whoso sees or hears may re-enact
In dreams poetic what the artist dreamt ;—

Whose sea of sacred light divine includes
All souls, solicits all, and watches still
For entrance, and with ceaseless patience broods,
And is aggrieved unless it may infill
Each helpless heart with power to do Thy will ;—

Who art the true light, clearly or darkly seen,
That lights us all the womb and grave between,
Illumining the clouds that intervene
Betwixt us and thy Spirit-sun above,
And glowing brightest when we pray and love ;—

Who beam'st forth in the noble, sweet surprise
That streams, forgiving, from the tearful eyes
Of injured gentleness ; and hast a place
In sacred gleams where shines the martyr's face,
In tender smiles where holy hearts embrace ;—

Whose will it is that we severely hate
And wrestle with the lusts that suffocate
Thy Spirit in our hearts, and slowly gain
At length the utter victory, and reign
With Thee triumphant over sin and pain ;—

Dost Thou not weep in all our righteous tears ?
Joyest Thou not in our true joys ? Thy years
Are they not mission'd that they shall not cease
To its just stature Thy great masterpiece,
The grand organic manhood, to increase ?

Yea, Father, even so ! And still Thy love
Strives ever to attract our hearts above
To Thee and to Thy high angelic throne ;—
And yet to basest levels we how prone,
And deaf to all Thy Word's appealing tone !

But now we kneel before Thee, and we say—
Prayer lived in, lived out, this th' appointed way ;
O help us then to live e'en as we pray,
Humbly, and taught of God, and striving still
To be obedient to Thy holy will ;—

Thence rising to the sure unfailing trust ;
The good deeds done, no more because we must,
But that we love to do them ;—sevenfold peace
All other peace, all ecstasy above ;—
Light ever-growing ;—ever-largening love.

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

THE old year, loath, disappears
In wind and in rain,
With passionate gusts and with tears
Protesting in vain.
The new year, eager, receives
The greetings of peace ;
And oh may its morns and its eves
Thy blessings increase !

If I pray thee a prayer, believe it
A service of love ;
If I give thee a gift, receive it
Its worth far above ;
I love thee much more than with prayer
Or gift I can speak,
Or hand within hand, or with lips, Love,
Aglow on thy cheek.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

ALL spiritual questions yet unsolved
 Are ask'd by their own answers, which, concealed
 At first, are sure at last to be revealed ;
 Bills safe, or soon or later, to come due ;
 Safe at the right time to be honoured too ;—

For this great universe is not a nest
 Of boxes within boxes, to be forced
 Lid after lid, until the last and least
 Rewards the searcher with, forsooth, at best
 An empty rhyme, or an insulting jest.

Shall it be thought that the great Lord o' th' world
 Hath twisted up its fibres into curled
 Notes of interrogation, whose bent backs
 Man shall not straighten, but must still let stand
 Crooked and querying still on every hand ?

Let us not cast such stone at our Creator,
Nor doubt that He will prove full Revelator :—
The world ignores man with her scornful eye ;
' O Sphinx ! ' he falters ; but she with the cry
' O Œdipus ! ' must finally reply.

The promised Cubic City, full of light,
E'en now descending from God's heavenly height,
Has touched the earth. O happy they whose right
It is to find a path that penetrates
Within its twelfefold angel-guarded gates !

But sorrow for the nations, who, with creed
Ill understood, or shattered, darkly stray,
And in wastes godless, or false-godded, bleed !
Be gentle with them, teachers, who essay
To show them than their own a better way.

And oh be ours indeed the better way !
Be ours the truest, worthiest thoughts of Thee,
Thoughts that behold, not dream ; adore, not play ;
Sincere and brave, large and sublimely free,
Yet led not by ourselves, O Lord, but Thee !

THE EARTH DEFACED.

HOW wonderful, how beautiful, the world !
At its continual creation, Thou,
O Lord, art present Maker ;—fashioned thus
Because it is a dwelling-place to be
Of them who shall be dwelling-place for Thee.

Thou, Father, build'st this palace for Thy child ;
A surface river-marbled, flower-emboss'd,
Scribed with old-time inscriptions in its floor ;
Close-clustered trees for its arched columns tall,
And sun, and moon, and stars, high over all.

'Tis we who shear the lustre from the sun,
And glory from the flowers. Wigwams of mud
We build within thy lofty Parthenon,
Between the noble pillars, and deface
With our mean uses the majestic place.

The robes Thou giv'st of very cloth of heaven
We tear to shreds wherewith to bind our limbs
In livid pressures ; then to those same bonds
We, self-tied, point ; to Thee appeal for ease,
And cry, ' O God ! why didst Thou send us these ? '

Forth from its marvellous founts the air, new-made,
Creeps glad, with health, to the abodes of men ;
We shut our doors in the kind creature's face,
And offer incense of deflowered breath—
Invoking-incense—unto Pain and Death.

The good soul of the trees and flowers we warn
Off from our homes, and will not have her arm
Cast kindly round us ; but, close crowding, stand,
Lest, leaving room amongst us, we begin
Haply to let our gentle lover in :

. And though to her, indeed, our very frames
Their being owe, for flowers possess their kin
In our own flesh, we hate her even there,
And make our homes dark, that she may not thrive
E'en in our bodies which she keeps alive.

THE BATTLE OF GOD.

AH, what a day was that ! A sweeter ne'er
Oped wonderingly its gentle eyelids mild
On the warm breast of any nursing year.
As looks and smiles a mother on her child,
So Nature on that young morn look'd and smiled.

She wrapp'd it in a robe of fleeciery sky ;
Trimm'd it afresh those lamps the poet sees
Burn every flower in odours secretly ;
Of each bloom-breathing wind she had, did seize
The richest moments ; then said, '*Dear, take these !*'

On that same day magnificent, great joy
Lay landscape-like a certain man before,
To whom it seemed there could be no employ
Awaited or conceived, save only o'er
Wide wilds of bliss to wander evermore.

Then in the chamber of his heart there came
A whisper of the Voice that still will bless ;—
A naming of the everlasting Name ;—
A Presence working the glad heart to impress,
And warm its each beat into thankfulness ;—

A sense as when a babe, half-sleeping, lies,
And with a gradual dawning comes aware,—
Less by the actual warrant of the eyes,
Than by the consciousness of tenderest care,—
Of presence of its watchful mother there.

And then he heard a solemn, priest-like sound,
Given in his inner spirit, to convey
A sense of ceasing, perfect and profound,—
As if all things around had paused, to say
' Here endeth the first lesson. Let us pray ! '

And soon a sob, a sinking, and a sigh,
A trance, a breathless sleep with open eye ;
And then a vision stretching heaven-high,
Of loves that kneel and sing, and thoughts that thank,
Incarnate all, like angels rank o'er rank.

Out of which heavenly trance ere long he strayed
Where lo ! with flowery streets, umbrageous greens,
And palaces, old earth was happy made ;
Happy all over with such perfect scenes
As poet, heaven on earth foreseeing, means ;—

O blessèd vision of old earth new-made ;
The law divine unquestioned and obeyed ;
Troḍ down for ever all things that degrade ;
All life by art and poetry refined ;
And God-love, man-love, blessing all mankind !

Was this mere idle dream,—as when, in car
Pendent from earth, in space's solar sea,
With our great globe balloon-wise over me,
I seem'd to float once, voyaging afar
Past moon and planet, nebula and star ?

Or was that better earth an orb that goes
In company with our earth, undescried,
As in dead night a traveller walks and knows
Naught of the angel who upon that wide
And desolate heath moves, silent, by his side ?

Or was this the great vision that still waits
To enter as a fact earth's opening gates ;—
A fact which all the prophets true foretell ;—
An earth where Christ as King and Lord shall dwell,
In world where all is new, and all is well ?

So strive, so reign, Almighty Lord of all !
So greatly win Thy planet-victory !
So gloriously what baffleth bring in thrall !
So strongly work, earth's lasting jubilee
With gladness and with singing to install !

And man may work with the great God ! Yea, ours
This privilege—all others how beyond !—
To tend the great Man-root until it flowers ;
To scorn with godly laughter when despond
Tamely before a hoary hindrance cowers ;

Effectually the planet to subdue,
And break old savaghood in claw and tusk ;
That noble end to trust in and pursue
Which under Nature's half-expressive husk
Lies ever to the base concealed from view ;

To draw our fellows up, as with a cord
Of love, unto their high appointed place ;
Till from our state barbaric and abhorred
We do arise unto a royal race,
Becoming blessed children of the Lord.

THE BEST OF IT.

THE seasons swiftly come and go,
And still we two remain,
Standing amid the changeful flow
Of joy and pain.
The joy we claim ; the pain, not small,
We dimly understand ;
But oh, thank God, we live through all
Still hand in hand !

THE SIGHT OF GOD

THE pearl, the amethyst, the gold, which shone
The stately creature's breast so bright upon,
No brilliance lent to her ; for she was decked,
I saw, to far more glorious effect
In that life-light she seem'd half to reflect,

Half radiate, from her presence ; the soft flow
Of breath, and beat of vital pulse, the show
Of growth unflawed, symmetric, and the glow
Of health resplendent, which I must have been
Most dull, if them unthankful I had seen.

But then, with what intenser wonder-gaze
I looked upon her face, beheld the blaze
Of light intelligent, observed the streak
And flush of fresh emotion on her cheek,
And saw her soul in every movement speak !

The more I looked, the more and more amazed
The marvel made me whereupon I gazed ;
But when I marked the love of God arise
In prayer and pureness in her mien and eyes,
And in her hands His faithful charities,

Then said I: 'Lord ! Though I, 'mongst atheists
driven,
Walked through their death-shade vale, Thy staff
and rod
Would me console, since here is Thine abode ;
This is none other than a house of God ;
This is indeed a very gate of heaven !'

And yet what can the outward vision see
But symbols mere, which far below Him fall ?
Only in His Divine Humanity,
High over every creature, are we free
To see in very truth the Lord of all.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

AS robe majestic down a statue flows,
So noble thought down Emerson. Withal,
Such sweetness went, you even might suppose,
Spite of that bearing dignified and tall,
A woman's gentle heart beat under all ;

For while no prayers his constancy could shake,
No storm avail his spirit's barque to make
From anchor of his settled purpose break,
His every action could not but confess
The tempering of ingrained tenderness.

Yet, while our young souls loved him, 'twas agreed
Amongst us that this man, though ever apt
For kind deed, and in self so little wrapped,
Almost too high for love was ; had indeed
Of no man's love or admiration need.

And yet he, loving, liked to be beloved ;
And if at times it might appear he moved
Austerely calm and cold, that was because
Grand hearts may not transcend their nature's laws
Either to beat more quickly or to pause.

There was the genial waiting on his friend
That friendship loves to feel. Absence would send
As much pain, as much pleasure presence lend
To him as one could wish ; but the control
Was over all of a self-mastered soul.

Therefore in our brief intercourse was mixed,
With strangeness, intimacy ; and a feud
There came our awe and confidence betwixt ;
And moods of his there were that must be viewed
Like gated ways where none might dare intrude.

One foolish man, by his sweet mien betrayed,
An undue freedom took. Swift silence played
Like lambent lightning round, and on us fell
Awe of the great majestic soul that well
Knew, still or speaking, how to be obeyed.

So have I seen in festive season go
A summer barque, laugh-lightened, 'neath the flow
Of waving flags, the while, in their sweet pride,
On deck the youths and maidens gaily glide
With motions by sweet music justified.

Sudden, o'er sunken rock, harsh grates the keel ;
From every mouth the merry laughter dies ;
The founts of music freeze ; astonished eyes
Gaze wide on eyes astonished ; and all feel
The fears proud hearts indignantly conceal.

But, no new shock confirming what each dreads,
Again the music melts and flows ; its threads
The dance reweaves ; over each mouth there spreads
The young vermilion laughter ; and once more
The fluttering flags wave wind-filled as before.

1849.

THE REASON OF IT.

AH why, why should the good so often lean
On arms which beats no worthy heart between?
And why should noble hearts so oft be seen
In loneliness and ageing anguish keen
For want of the sweet home that should have been?

And souls unselfish, who have gladly done
The generous deeds that have for others won
New scope and happier life beneath the sun,
Why must they, reaping, bind into their sheaf
The night-shades and the hebenon of grief?

It is because, let man do what he will,
Joy-light requires its sorrow-shadow still ;—
It is because away God will not throw
His labour, letting His dear children go
Robb'd of the needful discipline of woe ;—

It is because of this world's good th' excess,
Ill helping our eternal blessedness,
Is a less worthy God-gift than distress ;—
It is because 'tis not well, in His ken,
That we be happy, until we be MEN.

THE BRAGGART MOON.

THE Moon moved proud the stars among,
And spake aloud with scornful tongue :
‘ Stars ! minions ! rushlights of the sky !
Mean, ineffectual, worthless fry !
Mere drops of waste ungathered light !
Gilt buttons on the coat of night !
My plagiarists,—moon-copyists small !
See how I trample o’er you all.

‘ I, how magnificent I shine !
What splendours and what glory mine !
Mark, of what genius possessed,
I grandly march from east to west,
And pour o’er farm and town and tower
My many-sided beams of power.

Look and despair, ye paltry chits !
Were I divided into bits,
My fragments scattered o'er the blue
Would all be stars as good as you.'

Did any of the stars reply
To this poor braggart of the sky ?
With lofty joy I saw them keep
A silence strenuously deep.
They heeded not the scornful tongue ;
But each, his family among,
On his dark planet-children glowed,
And in the God-appointed road,
With faithful heart and watchful eye,
Led on his darlings through the sky.

It pleased the Lord our God that soon
There came a change across the Moon ;
Like pain we inly strive to hide,
There's blackness gnawing at her side,
Until, with anguish and affright,
She dwindles to a strip of light,
For o'er her face earth's shadow slips
A veil of humbling and eclipse.
Scorn of the stars deserts her eye ;
Her tears are dropped about the sky.

So weeps the poor Moon, sunk in ruth ;
Then, suddenly, she sees the truth ;
Sees that the light whereof she 'd grown
So proud, was nothing of her own,
And that her splendour wholly came
From the God-given solar flame.

O Lord ! if I, self-confident,
Should claim as mine what Thou hast lent,
Or ever, penetrate with pride,
Should be disposed to swerve aside
To sign my own certificate
As being good, or wise, or great,
Command this braggart Moon to rise
That moment in my spirit's skies,
And light me up, a thing forlorn,
Meet object for her withering scorn.

*' THAT THY WAY MAY BE KNOWN UPON
EARTH; THY SAVING HEALTH
AMONG ALL NATIONS.'*

WHEN spring through thrush and cuckoo
cries,

The root that in some cavern lies,
To cold and darkness thrall,
But dimly hears her call.

With sick shoots, pallid, piteous hopes,
Wan, idiot fingers, how it gropes ;
Lost for defect of light,
A scandal to the sight !

Such are the souls that live untaught,
Unlit of spiritual thought ;—
Poor sickly growths that shame
E'en vegetation's name.

What ! suffer human minds to dwell

Thus dark in ignorance's cell ?

O give to them the bright

Shinings of heavenly light !

Of truth divine all should be heirs ;

Her pathways should be thoroughfares

Free as the woodland wild

To every human child.

Whatever of God's truth is known

Common as grass-seed should be sown ;

O stint not ; let it fall

Free, free, for all, for all !

THE CROCUS.

O H no, take not the Crocus

To be your symbol-flower,

For love that is too passionate

Will soon itself devour.

The crocus's gold trumpets

Soon burst, and, in dismay,

Split up with love's intenseness,

In yellow flames decay.

AN UNSENT FAREWELL.

*Castle built in Spain,
At some lover's cost ;—
Seek for key in vain ;—
Key is lost.*

THOUGH you chide for all I do,
Yet am I in love with you.
Though you bid me to forget,
I shall love you—love you yet.

Though you trod upon my heart,
That the blood did gush and start,
I should answer, death until,
I forgive and love you still.

To forget? No; dream it not.
I by you shall be forgot ;
You by me, howe'er you plan,
Never, never, never can.

Think you, minds with love that tremble
Wax or paper do resemble?
After various fashions fold?
Take a shape from every mould?

No ; my soul did once reply
To the impress of a die ;
Thenceforth never could it own
Any print save yours alone.

God forbid, indeed, indeed,
You from hurt like mine should bleed,
With the true love of your soul
Drained into a broken bowl !

Or that, weighed in such false scale
As wherein my love did fail,
Other's should with you succeed,
God forbid, indeed, indeed !

Was it well thus, in the trough
Of grief's sea to cast me off?
Bid me trust to some chance reef?
Leave me weltering in my grief?

Yet this by-you-caused distress
Cannot make me love you less ;—
Noble, sure, the deed you do,
Seeing it is done by you.

So my high-esteeming breaks
Every bar your coolness makes,
And, whatever way you move,
Still I honour, still I love.

Yet, since grief to me appears
Worse in your than in my tears,
(For your sorrow mine must make
Twofold sorrow for your sake,)

Therefore nor in word nor mien
Henceforth shall my love be seen,
Nor with whatsoe'er I do
Will I ever trouble you ;—

Ever gaze where I adore,
Where your face with smiles runs o'er ;
Seek to quaff their generous wine,
Or to mix your soul with mine ;—

No, I will not ; nor yet seek
One poor friend-thought to bespeak ;
I shall gaze where I adore
Never, never, never more.

So I go my way unblest,
With a heart whose wild unrest
Never may its secret tell ;—
Ah, my dear, farewell, farewell !

Fare you well ! And be there said
God's best blessings o'er your head ;—
Blessings of the heavenly steep
And the under-couching deep ;

Blessings of the fruitful bough,
By the well-side prospering now ;
(Ne'er could I have spoken thus
But for Him who died for us !)—

Blessings of the breasts,—ah me !—
Child-encradling arm and knee ;—
All earth's bliss that can be given,
Not imperilling your heaven ;—

Bliss to be still yours, my dear,
Wheresoe'er, with whomsoe'er ;
Plenteous basket, bounteous store,
Yours, and theirs, for evermore.

As for me, I stiffen still
An unconquerable will ;
To despair no inch shall give ;
Hating life, go on to live.

Some day will God's reasons tell ;
Some day He will break the spell
That has turned His universe
Glorious, to His creature's curse.

Though it cannot be conceived,
Yet it stands to be believed ;
Breaking heart, so grief-beset,
God will bind, will heal it yet.

How, I cannot comprehend,
But, in some way, in the end,
He His miracle will give ;—
God will teach me how to live.

LOVE'S FREEMASONRY.

*Written, as I think,
In some secret ink ;
Yet the meaning, found,
Will prove good and sound.*

‘ **A** H, if to know the sign she fail,
He said, ‘ Woe, woe ! ’ and he grew pale.
The sign was made ; but not a trace
Of knowing was upon her face.

As if death’s mouth, the grave, had spoke,
His blood its law of flowing broke,
And he felt twist in every vein,
Snake-like, a nerve of swollen pain.

There wrestled he, standing apart
To force it back unto the heart,
If haply to a running flood
It might dissolve, of living blood.

O life in death and death in life !
O torturing, damn'd, yet conquering strife !
For yet, years afterwards, made whole,
He held the sceptre of his soul.

And lo ! with faces all elate
With such a joy, so deep, so great,
That its most dear, most sweet, and chief
Resemblance was to glorious grief,

They stood in voiceless transport round,
Naught owing to articulate sound ;
But a soft music forth doth press
And swells, and falls, from all their dress ;

For, as their nature stands above
The power of tongue to tell their love,
God makes from forth their garments' hem
Music go out and speak for them.

These looked, and loved him with their eyes
Filled with pass-words from Paradise ;
' And evermore,' he sang, ' the sign
Given, swift-answered, proves them mine !'

' Ah, Lord,' he said, ' I did but seek
To bless with love a maiden meek ;
A maiden given a royal, free,
Most god-like gift,—but not to me.

' I and my staff, wherein amassed
Was all my wealth, this Jordan passed ;
'Tis Thou who mak'st me here to stand
Augmented to a twofold band.'

LOVE ETERNAL.

LOVE, if I love thee, 'tis because I need
Not eyes to gaze into ; not lips to kiss ;
Not a soft breast for solace ; not the bliss
Of being loved while loving ;—this, indeed,
I thank thee that thou giv'st ; but I should bleed
Down in my heart for loving so amiss
If I had only loved thee, Love, for this—
Sure to shake off some day like idle weed
Entangled round my foot upon the shore.
No, if I love thee, Love, it is because
Beauty that is eternal I adore,
And must pursue it, whereso'er it draws.
And lo ! I travel on ; I may not pause ;
With thee I travel on for evermore.

THE SNOWDROP.

THY month and mine,—bleak Februere,—
The shivering snowdrop month, we share ;—
Snowdrop, whereby doth Nature show
How much her thoughts excel the snow.

Sweet frigid firstling of the year,
Slight scent is in this flower sincere,
Yet Februere for us doth bring
The joy of all the flowers of spring.

So take the little gift, and dream
Of lilies floating down a stream
With early roses, breathing scent
Full spring-like and most excellent.

And in like spirit dream this gift
Is precious ; or, if thou must sift
Reality from dream, yet say,
This is a true love-gift to-day ;

A gift of love as true and fair,
As is our flower of Februer, e,
Whose early coming doth express
Both purity and faithfulness.

And know, that if the gift had been
Co-equal with the love, no queen
Could look more rich, though she made bold
Her brow and dress with gems and gold.

THE SHEPHERDESS.

WHAT plenteous largess from her hands
Descends in gentle showers !
The maiden in the garden stands,
And feeds her flock of flowers.

I thank thee, duteous Shepherdess ;—
Though 'tis unknown to me
Whether those streams enlivening bless
The flowers most, or thee.

A RAILWAY RIDE.

WHILE I ride, while I ride,
While past field and village glide,
Streaming goes my heart's desire
Like a back-blown flame of fire,
Longing ever to abide
Far behind me, while I ride.

O my Queen, O my Queen,
Canst thou feel that flame unseen,
Flame not hurting though it burns,
Flame that homeward still returns,
Growing ever, eager, keen,
To thee rushing, O my Queen?

Dost thou know, dost thou know
What it is that warms thee so,
Bids thee be of happy cheer,
Lifts thee into heavenly sphere,
Makes thee every fear forego
In my absence,—dost thou know?

It shall burn, it shall burn
Till its master doth return,
Nor shall then its glowings cease,
But for evermore, in peace,
Fed from an exhaustless urn
By good angels, it shall burn.

While I ride, while I ride,
While o'er railway swiftly glide
On the wheels whose rhythmic beat
Sets itself to music sweet,
This the song of loving pride
Sung within me while I ride.

TO A. M. W.

ON RECEIPT OF *AURORA*, A VOLUME OF
POEMS BY A. A. & A. M.

WHAT though on my floor
I stood foot-sore,
Weary with wintry weather?
From my friend, like a bird,
There comes a word,
And I dance as on thyme and heather;
For I hear a voice
That sings to a voice,
And a voice to a voice replying,
And well may the songs
The hearer rejoice
Of two such hearts close-lying.

‘With hands well wed,
On the loom,’ I said,
‘They have wrought in golden weather,
He with the warp,
She with the weft,
On the wonderful loom together.

'Tween the threads he has brought
Of regal thought
Her magic shuttle plying,
A noble woof
Is this they have wrought
Of poesy undying.'

My friend, it shall rest
A star on my breast,
It shall be in my cap a feather,
That mine is a share
Of the fabric fair
That ye twain wove together.
Hear now a voice
That sings to a voice,
And a voice to a voice replying,
' Your thought-robe fair
Your friends will wear
And love with a love undying.'

THE DRINK DRAGON.

THERE is a murderous Thing abroad,
What need to tell its name?

Is it not written everywhere

In deeds of sin and shame?

A Dragon huge this monster is ;

Its claws are many and strong,

What living thing it sets them on

Shall not last overlong.

Its eyelids are like doors of vaults

Set over against each other ;

Its cruel eyes would never shut

From one year's end to another,

Only at given, law-set times

They are forced to droop and blink ;

But ever it chews and champs its chain,

This greedy Dragon of Drink.

Now where shall we the weapon find

That must this monster slay?

We thank you, noble men of Maine,

For ye have shown the way.

A woman slinks along the street ;
Her face is hungry and thin ;
The gaps in her rags, if pieced, are but pieced
With patches of shivering skin.
Would you believe it ? A happier bride
There never was than she
On the day when her lover said ' I will '
Neath the church's old roof-tree.
Yes, and his true intent it was
To love and cherish her then,
But the Dragon of Drink, though it goes to
church,
Has never said Amen.
' I will ; '—the words were strong and clear ;
—Now lies the sot in the gutter,
And scarcely a thing's to be understood
Of aught that he can utter.
How shall we make him a man again,
His wife's defence and stay ?
We thank you, noble men of Maine,
For ye have shown the way.

How sweet to watch yon little child
With curly locks that twist
About the neck and cheek that seem
Made chiefly to be kissed !

O guard the precious human life
Within that tender frame !
You would not have it come to harm
For anything we could name.
Alas ! that child has ceased to breathe ;
It perished yesterday ;—
The little thing was scalded to death
In midst of its childish play ;—
Or, the hard cart-wheel crush'd down its head
And mixed the brain with the mire ;
Or, it died in flames, while its mother's throat
Was inflamed with a slower fire.
Oh how shall we deal with that which takes
The very babes for a prey ?
We thank you, noble men of Maine,
For ye have shown the way.

She stands by his side, no lawful bride ;—
All her heart's love misplaced ;—
No manly thought was in his soul
That the drink has not effaced.
Alas for love not soaring above
Earth's miserable mire !
And alas for honour foully cast
In passion's lake of fire !

O fallen, fallen evermore,
And lost her honest fame !
Ah, mother dear, ah, father dear,
She brings you sorrow and shame !
'Twas Drink that lent him power to blight ;—
Drink drugg'd her conscience dim,
And bound her soul on an altar cursed,
A sacrifice to him.
How shall we stop such wrongs and shames,
Committed day by day?
We thank you, noble men of Maine,
For ye have shown the way.

This cell is tenanted by one
Who broke a house in the night ;
This other holds one heavy-eyed,
Who slew a man in a fight ;
Here is a lad not ten years old,—
Vice led, he followed its trail ;
But if they who bred him had shunn'd the Drink,
He would not have been in jail.
Yonder's the thing that bruised his wife
Within an inch of her life ;
On this bed lies the gasping wretch
Who opened his throat with a knife.

There's not one here on whom the law
Has lock'd the prison-door,
Whose doom had not gone out of the mouth
Of the Dragon of Drink before.
O brothers, let us up and cure
This monster-ill of the day !
We thank the noble men of Maine,
That they have shown the way.

1854.

THE MAINE LAW-HAMMER.

THERE'S a thing that is done,
Have ye seen? Have ye seen
This horrible thing that is done?
For silver and gold
Destruction is sold
To scores, for the profit of one.
Good creatures of God
Stamp'd down in the clod,
Stamp'd down inch by inch and piecemeal,
Flesh and blood, flesh and blood
Trod down into mud,
And it reddens the drinkseller's heel!

O to think of it, beat
And broke under his feet!
And still, when his crime we condemn,
Men say, 'It must be;
No help for it; he
Has an interest vested in them!'

Though even the rod
And the staff of their God,
To be fuel for him, some have sold ;
We 're forbidden to say,
' Snatch, snatch them away !'
Lest the publican's fire grow cold !

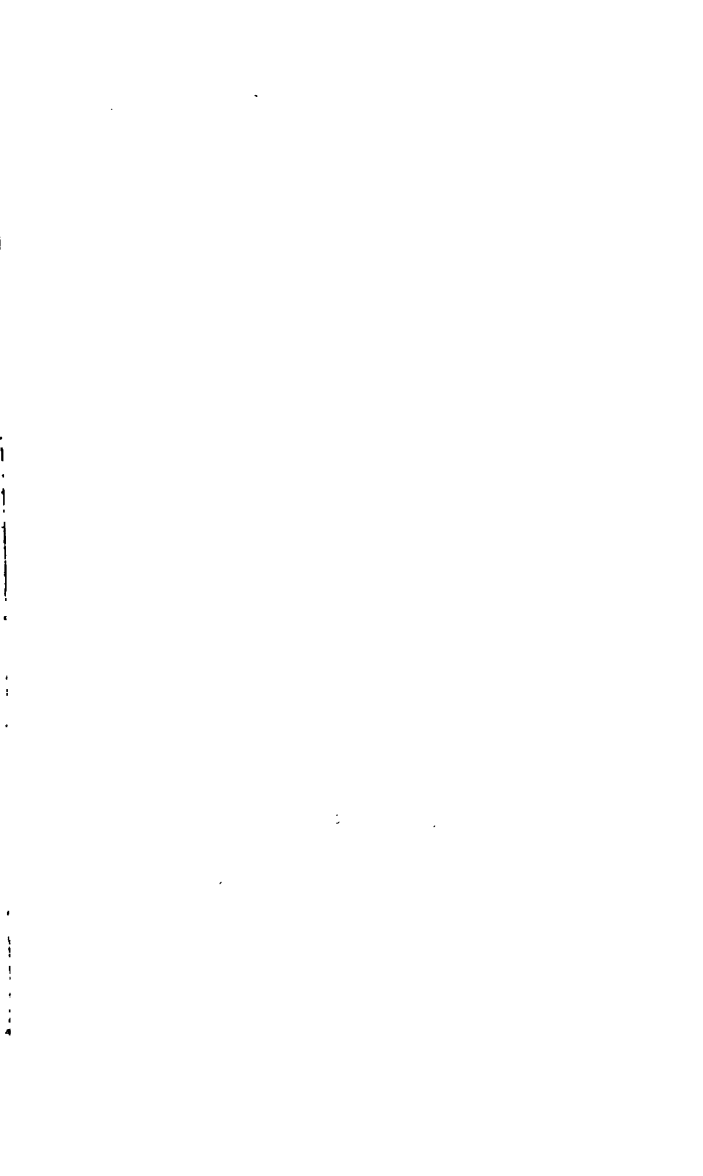
Ah ! yet there 's a word,—
Have ye heard ? Have ye heard ?
There 's a small living thought like a seed ;
In good soil it was sown ;
To a word it has grown ;
Hurrah ! it shall grow to a deed !
That deed, like a tree,
Shall luxuriant be ;
It shall shelter the world, for it ought ;
Oh ! it 's good, it is grand,
With the knee and the hand,
To pray and to work for that thought !

We have dared to conceive,
We have dared to believe,—
Ay, bound ourselves fast with a bond,—
Though down to our day
This wrong has had sway,
Not long shall it tarry beyond.

Do ye doubt? Do ye dare
To doubt and despair?
O look to the west, o'er the sea!
What we have begun
They already have done,
And they are but mortals as we.

Again and again,
O brothers! O men!
We have ventured to bruit it about,
That the drinkseller's cask,
His bottle and flask,
Were improved if their bottoms were out!
Already we stand
With hammer in hand,
The mighty law-hammer of Maine,
And devoutly we vow,
God helping us now,
It shall not be lifted in vain.

1854.



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